1: Herskovits E-4, 5 (1934) 1937 SV3 Haiti SV3
Mirebalais

about the square that precedes the principal mass of the day. These processions, however, are as a mere rehearsal for the great procession held during the festival of St. Louis, the patron saint of the town. At the time the statue of the saint, carried by the faithful — among whom can be seen more than one perspiring *vodun* priest and *bocor* — is taken triumphantly through the streets to insure a good year. The nearness of the valley to the village of Ville Bonheur makes the great religious festival of Saut d'Eau, where the "miracle of the Virgin" is believed to have occurred, almost a local matter. And though Saut d'Eau lies well over the mountains, July 15 finds most of the population of Mirebalais away from home celebrating the miraculous revelation with folk from other parts of Haiti. May Day is celebrated as the "Fête de l'Agriculture," and two years ago a new day of rejoicing was added to the calendar of festivals. This is known as the "Festival of the Second Independence," the anniversary of the departure of the American Marines from Haiti, and is marked by the "illumination" of all houses the night before and a solemn discourse from the mayor after a Te Deum has been sung in the church.

Thus life in the valley of Mirebalais continues the course it has followed for the past two hundred years. Though its history, as we can reconstruct it, has been marked by turbulent periods, these have been far from the rule. It is true that because of its position it has always been a point to be defended, and often, both before and after the time of Haitian independence, it has been a region where decisive encounters with those who controlled the Spanish portion of the island have taken place. Not for many years, however, until the Caco uprising against the American Marines, did Mirebalais experience military activities on any considerable scale. After the death of Charlemagne Perrault, when his successor selected the valley as a strategic point to be defended, a large force of Marines was encamped near the confluence of the

1: Herskovits E-4, 5 (1934) 1937 SV3 Haiti SV3

to speak the special "languages" of their particular cults. One aspect of this initiation,[2] which has been carried over almost unchanged into some parts of Haiti (though not into Mirebalais) is the ordeal by fire, in which the novitiate must plunge his hand into a pot of boiling cornmeal and rest his foot on the red-hot stones which support the pot.

The role of the family deities has already been given; of the third category, that of the personal forces, one finds first of all the soul, of which each individual is conceived as having three. More important is the cult of Fa, or Destiny, which came to Dahomey from the Yoruba, and is a part of a widely spread system of discovering the destiny of a man that characterizes not only West Africa and the remainder of the continent, but most of the Old World. In Dahomey today this end is carried out by assessing the significance of the various permutations and combinations of sixteen palm kernels "thrown" by the diviner. In addition there exist traditionally earlier and less "official" methods of divining, which in the main are those which have survived in the New World. Intimately associated with both the soul and the destiny of man is the deity who is at once a member of the great pantheons and one of the most personal of all the gods, Legba, whose African importance is attested by the extent to which he is today worshipped in many parts of the New World, and by his universality in Haiti. From the point of view of Dahomean philosophy Legba may be regarded as the god of accident, who gives to man a "way out" in a world ruled by an otherwise inexorable fate. Gross in his appetites and capricious, he is, nevertheless, beloved by the Dahomeans, and though his name is usually erroneously translated by the European term "devil," no appellation could be farther from reality. Of particular significance for his role in Haitan life as guardian of the crossroads and of the *barrière* is his place in Dahomean theology, since it is said: "Before the gods can

[2] [i.e., The initiation of devotees by priests into the religious cults of Dahomey - Analyst]

1: Herskovits E-4, 5 (1934) 1937 SV3 Haiti SV3
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Children usually share their parents' bed until they are [illegible]
eight years old, and the same room until they are ten or twelve. 864 513
They are counted on to sleep soundly enough, but it happens that a child sometimes awakens and, unknown to his parents, observes them. Though brothers and sisters sometimes continue to sleep together until the age of puberty, it is said that [835] attempts at intercourse between them rarely occur, for, according to Haitians, the children gradually sense that this is regarded as bad, and a boy approaching puberty who wishes to satisfy his desire for sex play goes to find a "little neighbor." Later, when the nubile girls are withdrawn from the com- 864 pany of the boys, the latter play with younger girls who have not yet reached puberty, or carry on "affairs" with those older than themselves; indeed, it is from these latter that they obtain full knowledge of sexual procedure.

What has been said concerning the growth and training of 597 children applies mainly to those who live with their parents. No discussion of the development of the child, however, can neglect to mention the widespread institution of a form of [184] quasi-adoption, found not only in Mirebalais, but in all other parts of Haiti. By this is not meant legal adoption, though that, too, is known and at times occurs. Quasi-adoption involves children who are called "*'ti moun qui 'reté à caille 'oun*— small folk who stay at your house," or, more briefly, *'ti moun*. They are the children, often of peasants, "given" to friends who live in a town or, as is the case with some families of Mirebalais, "given" to friends or acquaintances living in the capital. To what extent this relationship offers a means for the exploitation of children in other parts of Haiti cannot be said, though tales of abuses of it, especially in Port-au-Prince, are heard. To give a person a child in this manner is in Mire- [592] balais regarded as a token of friendship, and such children as were observed, though poorly clothed, were fed not much differently from the children of the families with which they were sent to live. When the *'ti moun* grows older, he leaves and returns to his own home, though the relationship between

1: Herskovits E-4, 5 (1934) 1937 SV3 Haiti 513
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CHAPTER VI

MATING AND MARRIAGE

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THERE are two ways in which a Haitian family may be formed. The first of these is through a marriage having the sanction of the Church, in token of which a ring is thereafter worn by the wife. The second mode of establishing a family is by means of the institution known as *placage*, wherein a man and a woman who desire to live together fulfill certain obligations and perform certain ceremonies at the home of the girl's parents, after which the new household is established.[1] The distinction between the two forms has been mentioned, though not analyzed, by several of those who traveled in the island after the period of slavery. Thus, according to Mackenzie:

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> "Marriage formally solemnised is not so common as unions of another kind. . . . In the North the practice of solemnising marriages is said to be more common than in the South, owing to the preceding practice under Christophe, and the exertions of the priesthood at the Cape."[2]

Similarly, St. John speaks of not noticing "any particular ceremonies" at marriages:

> ". . . some are striving to imitate the upper classes, and have the ceremony performed in church, but the mass of the people are still not regularly married."[3]

1: Herskovits E-4, 5 (1934) 1937 SV3 Haiti SV3
Mirebalais

sitting at the door of the central house, with huts all around in which his younger wives lived, as they could not be made to dwell under the same roof. . . . The French priests attempted to alter this state of things, but they did not succeed, as the wives, surrounding the intruders, asked them what was to be their position if the husband selected one among them and abandoned the rest." [10]

Elsewhere St. John speaks of the institution of *plaçage* by name, mentioning its prevalence prior to the period of his residence in Haiti.[11] Mackenzie, though not calling it by this term, tells of a rural Negro who, in the course of a long conversation during which the name of an officer of rank in the Republic came up, made the observation "with admirable naiveté and exquisite logic, 'C'est mon beau frère, parceque je vis avec sa sœur.'" [12]

Plural marriage is no less common in the valley of Mirebalais than elsewhere in Haiti. Despite the insistence of the Church on monogamy, many men have two "wives," a few have three or four, while one important priest of the *vodun* cult is said to have eight. The force of the sanctions behind monogamy and Church unions, however, has undoubtedly influenced the psychological "set" of the Haitian toward polygyny, as is especially to be seen in the violent manifestations of jealousy shown by co-wives toward one another. It is primarily because of this that polygynous households, such as are mentioned in earlier writings, are not found in present-day Mirebalais, and this also explains why a man with more than one spouse sees to it that where possible his "wives" live at such distance from one another that they have but little opportunity to meet. Even then, on occasion, a newly taken *placée* will pace in front of the house of her man's other spouse, flaunting the clothes and trinkets she has received from him. Or if women who share the same mate meet in the

1: Herskovits E-4, 5 (1934) 1937 SV3 Haiti SV3
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[P. 138 is blank]

CHAPTER VIII

WHAT IS "VOODOO"?

MORE than any other single term, the word "voodoo" is called to mind whenever mention is made of Haiti. Conceived as a grim system of African practices, it has come to be identified with fantastic and cruel rites and to serve as a symbol of daring excursions into the esoteric. Not only has emphasis been placed on its frenzied rites and the cannibalism supposed on occasion to accompany them, but its dark mysteries of magic and "zombis" have been so stressed that it has become customary to think of the Haitians as living in a universe of psychological terror.

What, then, is "voodoo"? "Voodoo," or *vodun*, as it will be termed here, following native pronunciation, is a complex of African belief and ritual governing in large measure the religious life of the Haitian peasantry.[1] It also has an even more restricted meaning in Mirebalais, where the word often simply denotes a form of sacred dance accompanied by spirit-possession or merely a dance which on occasion may take its place along with the *calenda*, the *martinique*, the *zesse*, and other social dances at public celebrations, where an occurrence of possession would be rare and in questionable taste. This latter meaning was recognized by St. Mery:

"The Calenda and the Chica are not the only dances in the colony which have come from Africa. There is an-

1: Herskovits E-4, 5 (1934) 1937 SV3 Haiti SV3
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other one which has been known there for many years, principally in the west, which bears the name of *Vaudoux*. . . . But it is not only as a dance that the *Vaudoux* merits consideration, for it occurs under circumstances which assign to it a place among the institutions where superstition and bizarre practices play a considerable part." [3]

In Dahomey, whence the term has come, *vodun*, as has already been stated, signifies "god" and is a general name for all deities. This source of the word has likewise long been known, as a reading of St. Mery shows:

> "According to the Arada Negroes, the real followers of *Vaudoux* in the colony . . . *Vaudoux* signifies an all-powerful and supernatural being on which depend all the events that come to pass on this globe." [4]

Similarly, de Vassière [5] quotes with approval a parallel definition from Peytraud, while modern Haitian writers also emphasize its Dahomean origin.[6] This meaning of the word had, however, undergone a change in its new home even during pre-Revolutionary times, for, according to St. Mery, the "all-powerful and supernatural being" had come to be a non-venomous serpent that stood as a symbol "for all those who professed this same doctrine." Today in Mirebalais even this identification is a thing of the past, though the prominence given serpent-worship in Haiti by most writers [7] would make it reasonable to suppose that elsewhere in the island serpents are maintained by priests of the *vodun* cult and play an important role in the rites at which the gods are worshipped. Indeed, one priest from Arcahaie encountered in Mirebalais mentioned the fact that in his own temple he kept such a snake. Yet in our valley no worship of serpents as such was encountered, and there were even those who declared that they had no hesitation in killing any snake, though these brave assertions could not be tested. Serpent-worship in Mirebalais

1: Herskovits E-4, 5 (1934) 1937 SV3 Haiti SV3
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may perhaps be said to have come to this: Adherents of the African cults refrain from killing the snake, and should they do so by accident, the African custom of giving ceremonial burial to any creature having supernatural importance is followed as an atonement. Where this is omitted, difficulties of so serious a nature are felt to threaten that to prevent them a priest of the cult is called upon to offer up a sacrifice and to beg forgiveness even after the little ceremony of burial has been performed.'

Inasmuch as *vodun* flourishes in Mirebalais despite the minor role of serpent-worship, it is evident that in seeking to understand its nature and its philosophy other aspects must be considered. Two historical facts must be kept constantly in mind in making this analysis, for without them, what follows would be meaningless. The first is that *vodun* derives from a background of African theology and ceremonialism. The second is that the Negroes have continuously been subjected to the influence of Catholicism during the centuries that have passed since their introduction into the island.

Yet another point may prove suggestive in providing a useful point of view for an analysis of the *vodun* cult. This bears upon a difficulty impossible and happily unnecessary to resolve in the field study of religion, which arises out of the degree of variation in answers to questions dealing with the same point. These answers differ not only according to the status of the individual in the cult, since layman and priest have understandably different concepts of the functions of deities based on unequal degrees of expert knowledge, but the extent to which an individual has religious interests or is indifferent to them influences the nature of his responses. A fundamental fallacy results from the fact that except where there is an officially sanctioned theology — which makes for dogma, and often for perfunctory worship, in contrast with the living dynamic nature of Haitian peasant belief and ritual — there are no "real" answers to questions in the field of religion. The

1: Herskovits E-4, 5 (1934) 1937 SV3 Haiti SV3
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student pursuing the "correct" statement will find that no matter how painstaking his method and how extensive his precautions, the versions of different persons can never be entirely reconciled, unless a false appearance of truth is given to his findings.[6]

If the underlying philosophy of the universe held by the Haitian is summarized, as it can be abstracted from his expressions of belief and from his observed behavior, this philosophy might be phrased somewhat as follows: The ruler of the universe is God, its Creator, who shares this task with His son Jesus, the saints of the Church, and the Holy Ghost. Man has been endowed with a soul, and the soul, which has come from God, returns to God for judgment and, if necessary, for punishment at the end of its sojourn on earth. From Africa — *Guinée* — the Negroes brought other deities, termed variously *loa, mystères,* or *saints,*[7] and these deities have been inherited through succeeding generations by the descendants of those who brought them to Haiti. The specific function of the African spirits in the Haitian system was given in the following terms by one of their devotees: "The *loa* are occupied with men, their task is to cure. They can make a person work better than he otherwise would. When the *loa* possess people, they give helpful advice. But they cannot do the things that God does. They can protect a garden, but they cannot make a garden grow, for streams, rain, and thunder come from God." Another statement clearly shows the same concept: "God made the *loa,* but did not make them so they might do evil. When a man purchases a *loa* for money, that spirit will do evil as well as good, but God becomes angry and will not accept these bad spirits into the sky, and He drives them away."

In the ordering of his daily life, however, the forces which are foremost in the consciousness of the Haitian make up the triad expressed in the phrase "*les mystères, les morts, et les marassa* — the *loa,* the dead, and the twins." Because of their special character, an examination of the twin cult and the cult

1: Herskovits E-4, 5 (1934) 1937 SV3 Haiti SV3
Mirebalais

steps to "feed" his *loa* in order to satisfy it, for it is more important to give offerings to the spirits than to dance for them. He therefore either quietly prepares a sacrifice of cereals and liquor in his own room or sends money home so that his *loa* may be "fed" at the family habitation, and his absence explained to it.[11]

When *vodun* deities are discussed in Mirebalais, most often two "companies" of them are mentioned, the Rada and the Pétro "squads." In one list of gods that was obtained, the word *Rada*, derived from the name of the ancient principality of Allada in Dahomey, called forth the explanation "*qui veut dire Dahomey* — which is to say, Dahomey," though it should be made clear that neither the words *Rada* nor *Dahomey* are any longer recognized in Haiti as place-names, being today simply qualifying designations of *loa*. There are regional differences in the number and ranking of other categories of gods that hold no important place in Mirebalais. The existence of these other categories is, of course, well known, and one person referred to "the seventeen and twenty-one classes of *loa*," of which, however, only the following were named: Rada, Pétro, Dahomey, Guinée, Congo, Nago, Ibo, and Wangol. Of these the Congo and the Ibo gods are well known, though their worship is chiefly restricted to individual families, while the Nago and Dahomey categories, though significant from the point of view of indicating African origins, are most commonly grouped under the term *Rada*. Guinée also occasionally figures in worship as carried on in individual families, but this term is more often understood as a general designation for all *loa* outside the Rada, Nago, Congo, and Ibo groupings and for certain Pétro gods. Wangol derives from the geographical entity Angola.

From comparatively early times the impression has been given that certain of these classes of gods perform only good, and others evil. Nothing could be further from the truth than this attempt to read European concept into Haitian ideology,

1: Herskovits E-4, 8 (1934) 1937 SV3 Haiti SV3
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a stream, there to remain until, becoming impatient, it demands to be taken out. A ceremony then brings back the tortured soul and makes of it a "*loa nan canarie*—a *loa* in a jar"—which thereafter acts as a guard for its family.

There is little agreement as to the place of residence of the *loa*. In general, it is believed that they come from Guinée each time they are called, returning when they have, in the native idiom, "descended from the heads of their horses"—that is, when the possession of their devotees has ceased. Those "under the water," however, being Haitians, remain in Haiti for seven years until the ceremony just mentioned, of putting them *nan canarie*, has been performed, when they, like the other *loa*, return to Guinée. At the same time, all recognize the African character of the *loa*, whether they be gods brought from Africa or the Créole *loa* from Haiti itself.

Worship of the *loa* is directed by priests of the cult. The terms *papaloi* and *mamaloi* as designations for male and female priests, almost universally employed by non-Haitian writers, are practically unknown in Mirebalais, where, as in most regions of Haiti, a priest is called a *hungan*, a priestess a *mambu*.[31] Besides the *hungan* (or *mambu*), and the *gangan*, a term applied to a *hungan* of renown, is the *bocor*, a practitioner of magic, not a member of any *vodun* priesthood, but a man who has acquired his power by the purchase of spirits. He is particularly differentiated from the *hungan* and *mambu* by the fact that the *loa* of their own accord are believed to have given "*connaissance*"—the knowledge of healing and helping, to these latter.[32] Not all gods can endow their devotees with this *connaissance*. Some of the Rada deities, in addition to those of the Ogun group who give it, are Legba, Damballa, Aïzan, Bosu, St. Jean, and Agwe Woyo; among the Pétro gods it is conferred by Bosu Trois Cornes, Simbi d'leau, Gede, Ossange, Malt' Gran' Bois, and Malt' Calfou (Carrefour). Simbi en Deux Eaux and Simbi Proméné both give magic power, the former conferring knowledge of excellent prosectives against

1: Herskovits E-4, 5 (1934) 1937 SV3 Haiti SV3
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werewolves as well as of the ingredients to concoct healing baths. Certain priests worship and control a large number of deities, as is shown by those which comprise the personal pantheon of a *gangan* from the valley of Mirebalais: Gedenibo, Erzilie Gé Rouge; 'Ti Kita Demembré; Simbi en Deux Eaux; Bumba Trois Îlé; Legba; St. Jacques; Ogun Ferraille, Ogun Balandjo, Ogun Ashade; Lemba; Aizan Keleké, Aizan Wedo, Aida Wedo, Damballa Wedo; Baron Samedi, Bosu Trois Cornes; Congo Wangol, Maît' Mapou; Agasu; Agwe, Agweto Woyo; Kadia-Bosu; Sobo Gran'; l'Afrique Guinée. Whatever his ability, the *hungan* can cure only diseases "sent by man" — that is, those caused by magic — and by the *loa*, since against illness sent by God he can do nothing. Gossip disapprovingly whispers how in more than one instance a *hungan* took advantage of his position and the trust of his clients, falsely to represent himself as able to cure an illness "sent by God" through stating it was due to magic.

An important function of the *hungan* or *mambu* is to foretell the future, and it is as a diviner that the *vodun* priest or priestess is most often employed. No major rite would be considered by a family unless divination were resorted to, but consultation is made for a far wider range of affairs than those of a purely religious nature, and no proposed undertaking of any importance in the secular field is begun without visiting a diviner to discover whether or not the fates are propitious. When divining, the priest is usually under possession by his gods, but other methods, such as gazing into a crystal or basin of water, may also be employed. Several divining séances were visited, but no description of them need be given here, since a number of accounts, including an especially full one by Parsons, are available.[36]

Though a certain hierarchy seems to exist among the *vodun* priests in other districts of Haiti, in Mirebalais the organization of the cult is informal to an extreme degree.[37] In the minds of the cult members, various priests in the same region

1: Herskovits E-4, 5 (1934) 1937 SV3 Haiti SV3
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are differentiated according to the types of healing in which they have had the greatest success, and the "miracles" to their credit, such as a *hungan* who had achieved a wide reputation for being able to resuscitate dead children. One *hungan* of the valley is spoken of as having powers which rank him with the greatest in the land, but now that he is old, a nephew of his is being called upon to act in his place. In a relatively short time, say his friendly clients, he will take his place even among great *hungans* elsewhere.

Under the *hungan* and *mambu* are assistants called *hunsi*, or sometimes, in the case of men, termed *adjanikon*. In some parts of Haiti, particularly in the plain of the Cul-de-Sac and the southern peninsula, there are degrees of initiation for the *hunsi*, which include the ordeal by fire that makes them *hunsi kanzo*.[28] In Mirebalais, however, the *kanzo* rite, though known by name, is neither required nor performed. The *hunsi* and *adjanikon* know the rituals in a general way, hold and wave the banners used to salute the gods, sing the songs for the *loa*, aid in bringing the possessed dancers out of their possessions, and perform such other ritual tasks as helping the officiating *hungan*. Some members of the cult group have special ability to sing large numbers of the ritual songs for any *loa* which may be called, while others perform the animal sacrifices. It is among these male assistants that the most expert drummers are found.

This, then, constitutes an outline of that system of belief included under the term *vodun*. Once more, in summary, it may be emphasized that *vodun* is neither the practice of black magic, nor the unorganized pathological hysteria it is so often represented to be. The gods are known to their worshippers, and the duties owed them are equally well understood. The reward for the performance of these duties is good health, good harvests, and the goodwill of fellow-men; the punishment for neglect is corresponding ill fortune. On this basis of belief is erected the ceremonial of worship.

1: Herskovits E-4, 5 (1934) 1937 SV3 Haiti SV3
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loa troubling the family, or, if it is the second, those which have helped them, to tell whether or not they are willing to receive the sacrificial animals. The omen which indicates their acceptability to the gods is their nibbling at leaves or pecking at grains of corn and other cereals offered them, after which the gods themselves come, possessing their servitors. At midnight or later, as the violence of the possession recedes, the sacrifices are offered. In Mirebalais, at least, the hysteria said to mark the moment "when the blood flows" is not present. The actual killing of the animals, witnessed in numerous instances, is one of the more routine aspects of the ritual.[4]

After the animals have been killed, a long period of quiet ensues while the work of dressing and cooking them takes place, the ceremony beginning anew when this is done. If evil deities are to be banished or "restrained," they are called once more, and the priest may have to battle with those possessed by them, for these gods have no desire to be driven away, or incarcerated where they cannot escape. Most of the food given such gods is placed in large pots and buried in the earth with them, but, with characteristic human perversity, if the sacrifices have been for good *loa*, these are only allowed to have small portions. The ceremony closes with the coming of day.[5]

This pattern varies in details, and to the Haitian these differences are important. This is shown by the response of a person in whose company two similar rites were observed, to the question whether the second would resemble the first. The answer was decisive. "No, the ceremony will not be the same. In the first one the most important spirit lived in a mango tree; in the second, it is in a bamboo." The Pétro gods receive black or gray-colored animal offerings, the Rada deities white, red, and vari-colored ones. Only Bosu Trois Cornes, Pelicon, and Pelib are given bullocks, the first because he, like this animal, is horned; the second because he is even more dangerous than Bosu; and Pelib because as a water-god he will otherwise take

1: Herskovits E-4, 6 (1934) 1937 SV3 Haiti SV3
Mirebalais

CHAPTER XI

THE CULT OF TWINS AND OF THE DEAD

SHARING powers and prerogatives with the *loa* in the supernatural world are the souls of the dead, the spirits of twins, and, in a specialized sense, magic, all working parts of a universe the ultimate force in which is God, who is sometimes spoken of as its Gran' Mait'. Their relative importance, however, is not easy to determine; and much less the manner in which the supernatural personalities in these divisions are linked with one another. Therefore, when such problems are presented to a group of Haitians, as whether or not the dead become *loa*, or the spirits of twins are related to those of the dead, or whether twins are the equivalent of the *loa*, or what the role of all these in magic may be, different opinions will always be heard.

One of these matters was explained by an elderly *hunsi* as follows: "*Marassa gagné morts longtemps, li deviennent loa* — Twins who have been dead a long time become *loa*," and "*Gagné gran' moun morts longtemps, deviennent loa* — There are those long dead who become *loa*," and she added: "But how this happens, I do not know." Despite a flat contradiction of this opinion by a man who was present, and a heated discussion between them, she persisted in maintaining the

1: Herskovits E-4, 5 (1934) 1937 SV3 Haiti SV3
Mirebalais

correctness of her view, while making an honest avowal of her inability to explain how this came about. On another occasion discussion turned upon the manner in which the powers of these supernatural beings are conceived in various parts of Haiti. Said one *hungan:* "Twins are stronger than the saints (the *loa*). The *marassa* are the mothers of the saints. So it is said at Arcahaie." The reply came: "In Mirebalais they say the saints are stronger."

During a lively discussion of the point by a group of active voduists the suggestion was made by one that the relative power of the *loa*, the dead, and the twins might be determined if the numerical strength of the following of each cult could be roughly ascertained. Since all give sacrifices for the dead — even strict Church members — and all who worship the *loa* give for the *loa* and the dead, while only some of this latter group give for the *loa*, the twins, and the dead, the person who had suggested this line of inquiry concluded that the dead were therefore strongest, because no one dared ignore them. Still another opinion, though in agreement with this, was based rather on the fact that the *loa* always exhibit fear before manifestations of death, as at dances where persons possessed by Damballa or Aida Wedo avoid those possessed by Gede, since he stands so close to the dead. However, it was pointed out by others in Mirebalais that the most costly and elaborate offerings are for the *loa*, that those for the dead are smaller, and those given the twins are least impressive, which was evidence enough for them that the *loa* are the most powerful of these three categories. All agreed, however, in ascribing to the twins the least power of the three, though what the *marassa* do for good or evil they do with intensity and dispatch.

There is ample justification, on both theological and historical grounds, for placing twins and the dead in a single general category. For, as one educated Haitian put it in pointing out that both twins and dead are worshipped on the same day, "*Marassa et morts font une chapitre pour nous* — The twins and the dead make a single chapter for us."

1: Herskovits E-4, 5 (1934) 1937 SV3 Haiti SV3
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M'a pé mandé, I ask,
Ça wé la si 'ou content? Are you content with what you see there?

The food is eaten the same afternoon. If the twins are actually alive, everything they wear must be new and they must have identical clothes. At the sacrifice of the January harvest, native rice, cakes, okra, bananas, and one, two, or three chickens, designated by the twins themselves, are offered. The food is put in place, and as songs are sung it is left until the following day, when it is eaten. The worship of twins differs markedly in various parts of Haiti. In Leogane, for example, some have such a ceremony only at harvest time, and have a greater *mangé marassa* every five years, when a goat and a chicken are killed and offered with the usual non-animal foods.

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Twins stand in a peculiarly intimate relation to each other, as might be expected from the traditional African belief that twins share a single soul, which, as far as could be determined, only survives in attitude in Mirebalais. Should one die, the living twin must put aside a bit of all food he eats, or a small part of any gift given him, for the other. If the twins are both girls, the attempt is usually made to have them betrothed and married at about the same time. If the female twin of a pair is married, she must give a present to her twin brother, and similarly her husband sees to it that his wife's male twin also receives a substantial gift from him as a peace offering, for it is dangerous to wait until the other decides on some overt mischief. The perplexing factor in dealing with twins is that they themselves often do not consciously will the trouble they bring. For example, should the twin of a married woman not feel friendly toward his sister's husband, though he might make a conscious effort to overcome this dislike, his spirit might proceed to use its full power to harass the man in such a way as to trouble the relationship of the couple.

1: Herskovits E-4, 5 (1934) 1937 SV3 Haiti SV3
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tion is a further comment both upon the human traits ascribed to them, and upon the realism with which they take cognizance — as only African gods can — of the financial position of their devotees!

It is not only in the immediacy of the Haitian gods to their worshippers and in their human qualities, however, that these beings have retained African traits, for in the full reciprocity that must prevail in the relationship between deities and their followers is to be seen a point of view that is entirely non-European. Between man and the gods the rule of *quid pro quo* must always be in operation; and this rule may only be regarded as but another contribution of Africa toward Haitian religious ideology. While this reciprocal giving flavors all aspects of worship whether it be of the *loa*, the dead, or the twins, it takes a yet more prominent, and more familiar place in the field of magic, since here the *engagement* owes much to European belief, though the element of reciprocity is much more emphasized than was ever the case in medieval European diabolism.

The psychological values of the *vodun* cult, especially the general tone found in the feeling toward the terms *Guinée* or *Rada*, perhaps most convincingly show the attitudes that aided in the retention of things recognizably African. For while the [184] Pétro gods are by no means viewed as altogether bad, or are always held unwelcome, the fact that in Mirebalais, as in Haiti generally, the Rada gods are those least feared, most desired, and in connection with whose cult wrongdoing is most rarely present, is of the greatest significance, especially when the related fact is recalled that the Pétro gods are the more powerful in the matter of evil magic, while the Rada deities are said to exert their power to protect their devotees from the dark forces that may be set in motion against them.

In attitudes toward the gods, then, in the names of the gods themselves, in the manner in which they function in the lives of Haitians, and in the importance of the ceremonial con-

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devotees prophesied and healed the sick. Even at the church, however, where all go to offer the prayers that are the central observance of the fête, the many candles placed on the rocks at the entrance are usually for St. Anthony; that same St. Anthony who, it will be recalled, is the *loa* named Legba, the guardian of all entrances.

It is obvious, from the examples given, that the world view held by the Haitian and the motivations which underlie Haitian life cannot be understood unless both the Catholic and the *vodun* contributions to them are held in mind. But certain further questions bearing upon the effect of these two influences present themselves. What proportion of Haitians hold membership in the Church, and how many are affiliated with the *vodun* sect? What attitudes are manifested toward the Church and its priests as contrasted with their attitude toward the *loa* and their ministrants? How does the Church meet the challenge of *vodun*? And how does the Haitian peasant, in his inner life, reconcile these two conflicting forces?

The impression gained from reading available works on Haiti is that voduists and Catholics constitute two distinct groups. While this may obtain in some parts of the Republic, it is not true either in Mirebalais or in those other portions of Haiti which came under direct though brief observation in the course of this study. All discussions with natives that began with the assumption of the existence of two such separate groups led to confusion, and statements which had seemed evasions were not clarified until the incorrectness of such an assumption became apparent. Thus when it was stated that in all Haiti the Pater Noster was one of the first things taught every child, the question: " Is this not true for Catholic families only? " was met with a vigorous denial that was slowly justified as the realization grew that, if not true for all Haitians, such an assertion was certainly valid for the vast majority of them in Mirebalais and probably elsewhere.[18] The identity of membership in the two groups became apparent from ob-

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the voduists this is not regarded as decisive proof of the power of Protestantism, for those immediately concerned it is held sufficient.[15]

What, then, of the attitudes held by voduists toward the Catholic Church? The correlation of Catholic ritual with *vodun* practice made by Haitians is of utmost significance in this connection. In discussing the Church service, it was pointed out that church bells announce mass or any other rite, and this, it was explained, is for Legba — *" Toute cloche c'est pou' Legba, même l'église, oui* — All sounding of bells is for Legba, even in church," for he must be notified so that he can " open the gate " for God, Jesus Christ, and the saints. *" Nou' même nou' connai' ça. C'est Bon Dieu crée tout* — You yourself know that. It is God who created everything." It was also recounted how when the priest preaches, he is possessed by the *mystères* of the sacred Trinity, for does he not gesticulate and become excited like any other possessed person?

Furthermore, it is believed that Gede, Ogun, and Damballa " are always at the church," often insisting that their worshippers take communion. Indeed, occasionally the *loa* of a woman may demand a Church marriage from a man to whom she is a *placée*. The sacraments of baptism, first communion, marriage, confession, and extreme unction are received by members of the *vodun* cult, though, as will be seen, when voduists confess, they say nothing of their *loa*. The *hungans* themselves " are most often at the sacred table to take communion," and one particular *hungan* not only attended mass, but was seen continually employing his rosary in the *vodun* ceremonies at which he officiated. While Haitians from the southern peninsula stated that the *hungans* there do not go to church, it was pointed out at the same time that all other voduists attend regularly.

The principal resentment held by Mirebalais voduists against the Church is for the cost of Church rites, and for the

[p. 308 is blank]

APPENDIX I

THE GODS OF THE VODUN PANTHEON

ONE of the most impressive facts about studies of Haitian peasant belief is the absence of any attempt at systematic treatment of the deities of the *vodun* cult, as concerns either their attributes, their functions, or their relationship to one another. Indeed, there are but two exceptions to this statement; Dorsainvil (I, pp. 174–5) has published a list of the names of gods, placing them in categories according to their African derivations, and Parsons (I, *passim*) has made available her notes on the characteristics of the deities of which she was told while working in the island. Otherwise, one reads merely of "the serpent-god Damballa," or of "Papa Ogun," or some other isolated designation. It therefore seemed of capital importance in making this study to obtain both names of deities and as much information concerning these gods as possible, and the resulting data are presented here.

One reason why perhaps not more of such "systematic theology" of *vodun* as exists has been made available is the great degree of individual variation which confronts the student seeking this kind of information, since differences of opinion are invariably encountered. Even priests do not by any means agree, for these men and women are supreme individualists, each being the worshipper of particular deities and exploiting special skills, with the result that the frame of reference within

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which a given priest operates differs from that of his colleagues — though, of course, always within the limitations set by the general pattern of the cult.

This range of opinion cannot be better illustrated than by giving, at the outset, three of the lists of *vodun* deities that were obtained, since here only so simple a matter is involved as names of gods. These lists, it must be remarked, were given by people living in the same valley; were they to be compared with lists collected from other parts of the island even greater disparities would appear, as will be evident if the collection of names of *loa* given by Dorsainvil is consulted. Certain deities, whose names recur below and are also to be found in Dorsainvil's list and in Parsons' notes would be included in any enumeration of gods of the cult, since their worship prevails throughout Haiti. Such would be Legba, Damballa, Aida Wedo, Aizan, Ogun, Agwe, Loko, Shango, Ossange, Bosu, Simbi, Wangol, Baron Samedi, Gede, and Erzilie. Others, though not enjoying as widespread a following, are worshipped over large areas. A number, however, either are gods that have resulted from the process of deifying the souls of those who, in a given locality, were renowned for their spiritual power, or represent survivals of regional African deities that have been preserved in certain large family groups.

Turning now to the lists themselves, the first of these was obtained from a woman functionary of the cult. A single asterisk after a name indicates that its exact counterpart is found in the second list presented here, while two asterisks show the precise name was included in the third listing.

Rada	*Pétro*
Damballa Wedo**	Pétro
Aizan Damballa**	Bosu Trois Cornes*
Aida Wedo	Bosu Djo
Ogun Galloné	Gedeonsu*
Ogun Ferraille* **	'Ti Kita Demembré*
Ogun Balandjo* **	'Ti Jean pié sèche*

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Ogun Sabaho
Legba Avardra
Mon Loa
Solugui
Azao Comble (*or* Coumbe)
Azao Pemba*
Ashade Bokor
Agasu Wedo
Agasu Djeme
Shango
Nago Shango
Acque Fer
Golimé
Agwe Woyo*
Agwesi (*his son*)
Agweta (*his daughter*)
Kadia Bosu
Sobo
Taureau
Congo Zandor* **
Congo Savanne
Congo Wangol
Congo Guinée
Erzilie Mapiangle*
Erzilie Gé rouge* **
Simbi Proméné*
Simbi troi' zilé*
Simbi Wangol
Simbi en Deux Eaux* **
Simbi Galloné
Bakala Baka (*or* Babako Baka)
Lemba Zahou
Bumba*
Gran' Alouba
Gran' Agersi
Gran' Siligbo**
Mait' d'habitation
Mait' Carrefour** (*called* Louis di' fils)
Mari boben
Nangovi
Nangozên
Pélécon*
Ossange Batagri
Ossange Batala
Mait' Mapou (*called* Garçon Mgampé)
Mait' des Eaux
Clairmé
Mme. Clairmé
Clairmézine
Mait' Baleine (Cong' la Mè')

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The second list was given by a woman prominent in the worship of the *loa;* the deities in the preceding list whose names were also included in this (that is, those that were marked with a single asterisk) are not given here, but a double asterisk indicates, as before, that they are also found in the third list.

Rada	*Pétro*
Damballa-Aida-Wedo**	Jean Pétro
Maît' Damballa	Bosu d'l'eaux
Maît' Aizan	Maît' Bosu
Ogun Batagri**	Gedenibo**
Général Ogun	Gedeou
Legba grand-chemin	Maît' Clairmé
Legba nan barrière	Fille Clairmé
Legba Maît' 'bitation	Lemba**
Maît' Azaou	Seli-ho
Maît Ashade	
Maît' Bokor	
Maît' Agasu	
Agweta Woyo	
Sobo-Bade	
Papa Pierre	
Gran' Alouba	
Gran' Aguera	
Gran' nan Canari (*or* Gosen)	
Général Malugué	
Lt. Général Jean Baptiste	
Gran' Erzilie	
Erzilie Freda Dahomey	
Maît' Ossange**	
Maît' Batala	

The third list is that given by a minor functionary of the *vodun* cult, known for his ability as a leader of songs. In ad-

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dition to the *loa* marked with doubled asterisks above, the deities he named were:

Rada	*Pétro*
Aizan	Kita
Aizan Marché	Erzilie
Aizan Marché loko	Papa Simbi
Ogun d'l'eaux	Simbi Gran' Bois
Ogun Batala	Simbi Cimitière
Ogun Ashade	Simbi caille moin
Papa Ogun	Simbi Carrefour
Papa Agasu	Simbi Kita
Agasu Tèmèré	Simbi Magie
Siligbo en bas d'l'eaux	Simbi Pétro
Siligbo Vavou	Simbi Macaya
Loko Kisigwé	Gran' Bois
Loko Yai	Baron Samedi
Pa Loko	Gran' Siligbo
Marassa Nundé	
Loa Créole	
Dahomey Freda	

Some of the inconsistencies and individual variations in the naming of the gods as demonstrated in these lists may be specified. Outstanding are the differences found in the manner of naming a single god, as when Général Ogun is called Ogun Galloné or Papa Ogun, or when Aizan Damballa is listed as two *loa*, Mait' Damballa and Mait' Aizan. Lack of agreement, however, is manifested in other ways. Though Taureau is given as a Rada god, during one *vodun* dance for the Rada deities, when a man was possessed by this *loa*, he was quickly led away and brought out of his possession, since Taureau, regarded by the group giving the dance as a Pétro deity, could not properly come to a rite for gods of another "company." Or again, whereas the second list names Mait' Ossange and Mait' Batala as Rada *loa*, the first list places them

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in the Pétro group. The Erzilie gods are put in both categories, while Gran' Siligbo, designated in the first list as Pétro, was assigned to both "companies" by the person who gave the third list, and named as a Rada deity by the one who gave the second. Furthermore, the third list, that of the singer, comprises *loa* whose "names" are undoubtedly the result of the acceptance by this man of certain phrases from his songs as valid designations of gods, especially such names as "Aizan Marché Loko" or "Loko Kisigwé." It is not without interest to speculate on this as a possible mechanism by means of which new names are added to the *vodun* pantheon.

Only one of the lists specifically assigned gods to other than the Rada and Pétro categories. One of these was termed *Guinée* and included the following names of deities:

Kaplaou	Congo
Enwizo	Loa Sinegal
Wangol	Cangaron

The other was the Ibo group, accorded two names, the Loa Mondongue and a *loa* named Ibo Lélé.

More variable, however, than classifications of the *loa* are accounts of attributes and interrelationships, and details of their worship. Yet certain traits and functions of the gods and aspects of their ritual can be set forth. One way in which the Haitians determine such matters is by reference to the songs sung in honor of the gods. Again and again the texts of such songs were cited as authority, suggesting that they are the "holy word" of *vodun* theology and an important device in stabilizing the details of belief. The attributes of the gods which follow are the result of extended discussions with folk who possessed all degrees of knowledge of the details of the cult and who were all active participants in it.

Legba, guardian of the crossroads, the highway, and the *barrière*, the entrance to every house, yard, or garden, is one of the most important *vodun* deities. He is generally conceived

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as a limping old man, clad in tatters, but in his several manifestations has more specific characteristics. Thus Legba Pié Cassé is described as having paralyzed legs, with arms held stiff and crooked before him, and Legba Avardra is spoken of as a *vagabond* who continually wanders the principal highways. Legba must first be summoned before any ceremony may begin, and when it was asked how Legba could be expected to come when called simultaneously to three or four or twenty or fifty places, the parallel given was that of the multiple manifestations of which God or Christ or a saint is capable. Legba, identified with St. Anthony, has Tuesday as his sacred day, and the plum tree is reserved for him. He "eats" a varicolored type of cock known as *poule zinga*, marked like a guinea-fowl, and in this differs from other gods who must indicate through a possessed devotee or a diviner what specific offering among the things they favor is wanted on the occasion of each sacrifice. Though in southern Haiti the smallest chick from each hatching is reserved for Legba, and at least once during his lifetime a man puts aside a bullock or a male goat as a sacrifice for this god, these customs do not prevail in Mirebalais. Here, when an offering to the gods is in prospect, Legba is included among the *los* to whom a certain animal is promised, and, as in the case of other deities, this animal is thereafter under his protection. But this is the nearest approach to any special offerings for this god.

Damballa, an important Rada god whose symbol is the serpent, is said to bring rain because they sing "*Damballa nan l'eau*—Damballa in the water." The sacred color of this deity, worn by devotees under possession, is white, and the full initiates wear white necklaces as well as white clothing. This god, identified with St. Patrick, is especially worshipped on Thursdays, and shares the white fig tree with Ezilie and Gran' Siligbo. Damballa "eats" sacrifices of white chickens and pigeons, rice, milk, eggs, pineapples, and fig-bananas; and "drinks" *kola* and sweetened coffee. Damballa forms the

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combines an explanation having an element of correctness — "a charm against harm" — with entire misunderstanding when he speaks of the color as symbolizing a "declaration of a holy war against wrong and oppression." Some, but not all of the Ogun *loa* drink Haitian rum. Ogun himself is identified with St. James the Elder, and his sacred day is Wednesday. This *loa* is a *Nèg' défence* and protects his worshippers from bullets or wounds inflicted by weapons. Ogun Balandjo guards travelers, though he is not as strong as such others of the Ogun group as Ogun Badagri and Ogun Batala, with whom he shares the bamboo tree as a habitation. The former gives *connaissance* — knowledge — which permits those he possesses to prohesy; the latter endows with the ability to prepare healing baths. The Ogun *loa* Erzilie and Dumballa are jealous gods. On the day sacred to each, a devotee puts fresh linen on his bed, places powder, soap, and a comb near by, and sleeps alone. If the devotee is a woman, her husband sleeps elsewhere; if a man, his wife must seek another place; otherwise the transgressor would die.

Agwe Woyo is god of the sea, but, as might be expected, neither he nor his son and daughter, Agweto and Agweta Woyo, figures as importantly in Mirebalais as in coastal areas. For the folk of Mirebalais the river-gods, particularly the spirit of the Artibonite River, are of much greater importance. This last-mentioned *loa*, named Clairmé, a Pétro deity like his wife and daughter, Mme. Clairmé and Clairmézine, lives in the deepest part of the stream with the other members of his "family." Similarly, the deepest parts, or *bassins*, of tributary streams hold the spirits of those waters. And since all these tributaries flow into the Artibonite, and the Artibonite empties into the ocean, it is said that when the river is in flood, Clairmé is engaged in inspecting his domain, being greeted by the spirits of all the smaller rivers as he passes their mouths. At this time the flow of the water in each tributary is arrested until he has gone by, when, in a great swirl,

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it joins the flooded Artibonite as its master accompanies Clairmé on his way to consult with the great ruler of the sea, Agwe. Actually, at the height of the rainy season the force of the light colored muddy water of the major stream holds back the darker colored flow of its tributaries in a manner which accords with the legend, so that, observing the Tombe River at one such time, the Haitians who were present said: "The Tombe is waiting for its master to pass."

Gede, a deity who figures in both the Rada and the Pétro groups as chief functionary under Baron Samedi, ruler of cemeteries, is tolerated rather than favored, though his rewards to his devotees include the refusal to dig a premature grave for them. When Gede possesses a devotee at a dance, Damballa, Ogun, and the other Rada gods "leave" at once, and those who are possessed by them come out of their possessions. For though Gede is no less a *loa* than other gods, "He is a *zombi* and is fed apart"; as the Haitians say: "The *loa* are like human beings. They will not mingle with the dead, and Gede is of the dead." His color is black, and Saturday is his sacred day. He "eats" salt herring, hot peppers, cassava, roasted corn, roasted bananas, and other roasted foods. He drinks *clairin*—much of it—and at great ceremonies a black goat and chickens are killed for him, as well as those chickens with ruffled feathers called *djakati*, which in all the New World, as in Africa, are believed to discover and dig up magic charms set against their owners. He lives in the cemetery, "behind the cross." There are a number of deities whose names are compounded with the name of Gede—Gedenibo, Gedeoosu, Gedehun—and hence the question whether or not this is a generic term or a specific designation is pertinent. There is no agreement on this point, and it could only be established that those *loa* who bear the same name, such as all Ogun or Bosu or Simbi deities, are brothers; but who the parents of these groups may have been is not known.

Associated with Simbi and Gede in the Pétro "squad" are

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[8] Mackenzie, ii, 124.
[9] St. John, 162.
[6] Cf. Price-Mars (I), 201–2.
[5] Price-Mars (I), 205, gives this as the proper age for a man of the region of Kenskoff, near Port-au-Prince, to marry.
[6] Cf. Price-Mars (I), 216.
[7] Ibid., 211–12. A facsimile of this letter is given on pp. 213–15.
[8] Ibid., 216–17.
[9] Mackenzie, i, 38.
[10] St. John, 143–6.
[11] St. John, 145.
[12] Mackenzie, i, 57. Wirkus, 222, mentions a case of polygyny on the Isle à Gonave where the wives apparently inhabited one compound with their mutual husband.

CHAPTER VII

[1] This seems to differ in various parts of Haiti; thus, near Port-au-Prince, the father of the girl "designates to his future son-in-law the land where his house is to be built," according to Price-Mars (I), 216.
[2] Cf. Parsons (I), 163.
[3] Among the obligations of the peasant mentioned by Price-Mars (I), 34, is "the respect due to the elders who are the repositories of tradition."

CHAPTER VIII

[1] Whether or not vodun is a religion, a problem which Haitian writers (e.g., Price-Mars (I), 32 ff.) are prone to debate at length, need not be considered here, since to an ethnologist the answer is too patently affirmative to require discussion.
[2] St. Mery, i, 43–6.
[3] Ibid., i, 46.
[4] De Vaissière, 178–9.
[5] Dorsainvil (I), 158 ff.; Price-Mars (I), 59.
[6] For a useful resumé of statements concerning Haitian serpent-worship, the grievous misunderstanding of which is an outstanding characteristic of this honest but ill-conceived work, see Williams, *passim*.
[7] Price-Mars (I), 118 ff., also records his belief that serpent-worship is far less important than it has been represented, saying: "We believe it to be well-nigh abolished." Seabrook, 310–12, also holds to this view.
[8] Parsons (I), 137, states: "There is little or no philosophic or religious expression of the theory to be

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contents, is given by Wirkus, 178–9. Compare this description with the *humfort* pictured in Johnston, p. 194.

[6] It is to be emphasized that in the course of the *vodun* rituals witnessed during this field-work, none of the "frenzy of the blood lust" that is so favorite an aspect of these ceremonies with writers of books on Haiti was encountered. As an extreme example of this heightening of the tone with which a ceremony is described, the work of Seabrook may be cited, for phrases such as "blood-maddened, sex-maddened, god-maddened" used by him mark perhaps an all-time record for distortion of the inner discipline of the *vodun* cult.

[6] Cf. Parsons's brief sketch, (I), 172–3, of a *mangé loi*, though the "bloody anointing" of which she speaks was not seen to occur in Mirebalais *services*. Detailed descriptions of what apparently were *services* are given by Wirkus, 168 ff., who, though honest in recounting what he saw, realized nothing of its significance; and Seabrook (pp. 54–70), who reads so much into what he purports to have witnessed that the entire account is rendered useless.

CHAPTER X

[1] Compare Parsons (I), 167–72.

[2] The drunkenness at serious dances reported by Parsons (I), 172, and others, would not be tolerated in Mirebalais.

[3] Price-Mars (I), 208, gives the name of *assotôr* for the great drum.

[4] Much nonsense has been written concerning these drums. Many writers — all non-Haitians — stress the existence of a drum language, which seems to be an assertion of dubious truth.

[5] This is a striking example of what Dorsainvil (I), 73–4 and 131 ff., calls the *masque vôduique* in detailing the effects of possession on the features of the possessed. See also the discussion of possession in Price-Mars (I), 122–3. The Gede possession described by Craige, 73–4, must, on the basis of customary Haitian behavior under possession, be subject to reinterpretation.

[6] Cf. Parsons (I), 170.

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CHAPTER XI

[1] Compare Parsons (I), 173–4, where the cult of twins is discussed and some of its rites described.

[2] Price-Mars (I), 35, mentions this as a power believed to be held by twins.

[3] The phrase "cult of the dead" as employed here must be sharply differentiated from its misuse by Seabrook (82 ff.).

[4] Cf. Price-Mars (I), 34.

[5] Price-Mars (I), 34, speaks of the custom of always burying charms with the dead.

[6] Wakes have been described by Seabrook, 89–91, and others, but in such a manner that it is difficult to dissect out the reality of what was witnessed from the imaginative elements.

[7] Cf. Wirkus, 221–3. The custom of giving the dead food at the grave, which he describes, is not followed when burial occurs in the Mirebalais town cemetery, nor, seemingly, elsewhere in the valley.

[8] See the description of a commemorative rite for the dead in Price-Mars (I) 148–50.

[9] This is a rule followed in West African practice.

CHAPTER XII

[1] An interesting attempt to account for this is found in St. John, 230–1, where he speaks of the "two Vaudoux sects," one good and one evil.

[2] St. Mery, i, 36. The term *garde* is almost entirely absent in later writings, the more sensational *wanga* (*ouanga*) being preferred.

[3] Léger, 55, note 34.

[4] Cf. Dorsainvil (I), 171.

[5] No better summary of this could be had than that in Parsons (I), 179, written after a single séance with a *gangan*.

[6] Pp. 324–31.

[7] Mr. J. C. Trevor informs me that during a recent field-trip to the Virgin Islands he discovered books of magic in common use, obtained from a Chicago dealer.

[8] It is not without interest to note that in the case reported in a Port-au-Prince newspaper and reproduced in facsimile by Seabrook, 334, concerning a woman from the commune of Mirebalais accused of sorcery, the name of the woman was *Azéman*.

[9] Cf. Parsons (II), 396.

[10] See above, pp. 94–5.

[11] The closest correspondence

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to the Haitian *baka* found in the New World are the *bakru* of Dutch Guiana, who in turn derive from the "little folk" of West African belief, beings that are always important in making magic. See Herskovits, M. and F. (IV), 105–7.

[12] Dorsainvil (I), 130, mentions this rite.

[13] Notably by Seabrook, 92 ff., who made great capital of the concept and purported actually to have seen these beings! Parsons (II), ii, 592, Tale 77, I, reproduces a Haitian's account in Créole of how a Sorcerer goes about ensnaring a victim to make of him a *zombi*.

[14] Parsons (I), 178–9.

CHAPTER XIII

[1] Price-Mars (II), 96 ff., gives a detailed description of the peasant house. The beehive-shaped hut mentioned by Craige, 36, is not found in Mirebalais, though the valley is but a short distance from Hinche, of which he was writing. Seabrook, 18, also describes the interior of a peasant house.

[2] Charlevoix, ii, 42.

[3] St. John, 153.

[4] Seabrook, 104 ff., devotes some space to a discussion of *pénitence*, but so changes its meaning to the Haitians that it is quite useless in making a serious comparison of data.

[5] See the discussion in Dorsainvil (I), 150, concerning other retentions of African motor behavior in Haiti.

[6] Craige, Seabrook, and Wirkus, all give lively accounts of cock-fights.

[7] Cf. Price-Mars (I), 1–15, for accounts of the manner in which stories are told in Haiti. It is to be noted that the African belief that a tale must not be told during the daytime persists there.

[8] A large collection of Haitian folk-tales has been published recently by Parsons (II), ii, 470–596.

[9] Audain has published what is perhaps the largest collection of Créole proverbs; his work, however, is unfortunately out of print.

CHAPTER XIV

[1] Dorsainvil (I), 158.

[2] Exceptions to this statement must be made in the case of the careful study of the relationship between Catholicism and *vodun* by Price-

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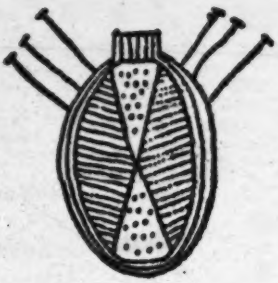

Preface

Every student of Haitian life is soon impressed by the richness of the materials spread out before him and the necessity of limiting his field of investigation. A study of Haitian religious practices, for example, draws one deeper and deeper into profusion, variation, and contradiction. One finds little difficulty in drawing a generalized picture with swift, bold lines; but when he descends into detail he discovers that the broad generalizations of the religious system contain within them many shifting and even warring motifs, and that what in one region is held to be true is not so regarded in another. The gods of *Vodoun* that are revered in one village are given only perfunctory treatment in another. Rites for the dead have a common denominator everywhere in the country, but each community brings to them something of its own or emphasizes traditions that elsewhere are forgotten. So it is also with music and dancing. A traditional drum rhythm may have one name in the north and another in the south, or a certain rhythm may be called by different names. There are diverse opinions about which dances are preferred by certain deities. The meaning of a song can be interpreted differently by different people. It is therefore no wonder that competent works on Haiti do not completely agree with one another in many respects, or that they seem, now and then, to be saying different or even contradictory things. Yet in many instances the seeming inconsistencies are in reality only minor variants within an overall scheme.

The purpose of this book is to present a broad view of certain aspects of Haitian culture and wherever possible to extract some of the flavor of Haitian thinking as well as its sense. It is easy to be fooled in regard to both. I remember seeing an old bearded man in the mountains beyond Furcy walking around his freshly hoed garden breaking a ripe tomato into small juicy bits which he scattered on the ground. It was about as primitive a method of planting as I had ever seen, and I wondered if even

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one seed from that tomato would ever take root under the hot sun. Some time later, when I knew this man well, I talked to him about the care with which seeds must be planted if they are to grow properly. I told him how *we* grew *our* tomatoes. He listened carefully, nodding his head. When I had finished he said: "Yes, that must be a good way to do things in your country. But here in this valley God is good. He does not forget his children. From the broken tomato many plants will sprout. When God is good to you, you do not have to count the seeds." I suggested that perhaps one should not waste any of the precious seeds that God had provided; and to this he replied: "How is there waste? My garden is made to flourish by Zaka [the country man's special deity]. Some people give Zaka a feast every year, but between times they forget. Zaka helps me in my work, and I don't forget him. When I break the tomato and put it on the ground that way, it is a little taste for Zaka. Whatever I plant, I give him some. He is good to me, I am good to him."

What I learned from many incidents like this one was that the eye does not always see correctly. The old man was not just planting tomatoes, nor was he performing a conventionalized ritual act. It was a highly personalized act of faith in nature and confidence in the deity who shared his work.

A large part of this book deals with Vodoun, the religious practices based on West African traditions. One soon discovers that the songs and dances of Vodoun ritual are not merely music and motion supplementing and decorating more serious affairs. Virtually every aspect of Vodoun ritual is placative or invocational. The songs that are sung and the dances that are danced are direct supplication of various supernatural forces.

Undoubtedly, a number of principles which are put forward in this study do not apply equally to every region of Haiti; but they are, I think, true in general terms. Not until one has accepted the fact that different explanations exist for given phenomena, that the same rites are performed in different fashion in different places, and that the cult priests themselves do not agree on many details, may one begin to work toward a general view of the Haitian scene.

All of Haitian life is not Vodoun. And there are of course some Haitians who are relatively outside the central circle of its influence. But the inner meanings of Vodoun and its relationship to the total view of life permeate the entire scene. Music, too, binds together practically the entire fabric of Haitian existence. It is essential not only to the cult temple but to countless workaday activities. Agrarian work groups often perform their tasks to the accompaniment of a drum. And in the cult temple, the iron hoe of the fields often serves as a percussion instrument.

The Drum and the Hoe is the result of studies made over a period of

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ing Boyer's administration, 1818–1843, Catholicism was the state religion but the president was its chief. Leyburn notes:

> Every effort of the state failing to provide proper religious leadership, Boyer resigned himself to permitting those who professed to be priests to practice in the republic. There were seventy so-called priests in the country in 1840. Some of them had once been in the holy orders but had been unfrocked: they found in Haiti not only a haven but a fertile field for gain. In addition to these religious renegades came adventurers who knew just enough of ritual and theology to use the priestly garb as a cover for easy graft. . . . They baptized houses, boats, and doorposts, and blessed fetish charms or amulets, all for a fee.[8]

It was not until 1860, after the death of the "Emperor" Soulouque, that Haiti signed a concordat with the Roman Church.

The role of the prêt' savane became defined after the slave revolts of 1791. His cue was taken from the activities of freebooting Europeans who apparently needed neither religious orders nor profound Catholic knowledge for their pseudo-clerical work. And the long period without a responsible priesthood gave the "bush priest" an opportunity to flourish.

The prêt' savane of today has a respected place in the community, though his prestige is not so great as that of the houngan on the one hand or the Catholic priest on the other. His place is guaranteed by his ability to bring to the Vodoun service elements of a competing system which the houngan, operating within the framework of African tradition, does not provide. Acceptance of these Catholic elements as a peripheral part of Vodoun is characteristic of much West African religious thinking, in which new deities and rituals may be added to the old when circumstances require.

The prêt' savane opens many Vodoun services with an *action de grâce*, reads prayers when a death has occurred, participates in marriage rites, and "baptizes" the hounfor, the cult drums, and the sacred rattles—not to mention the loa themselves! But it is the houngan's powers that are paramount. The "bush priest" is in a sense performing a service for the Vodoun priest, whose rituals and administrations are regarded as the effective and vital ones. The prêt' savane is a cultural afterthought.

In certain remote and isolated mountain places the prêt' savane is virtually unknown. But there is no sense of deprivation, for the cult priests —even the poorest and the most rustic—have their own way of dealing with the saints, God, and the forces of nature. An aged houngan of the Morne la Selle region explained it this way:

"In everything that is done, God's permission is asked first. Most houngans in the mountains do not know how to read, and they don't know how to pray. But they know many things. They know where the sun rises,

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and they address St. Nicholas, who opens the day, and they know the wish of God. In the name of St. Nicholas they raise a glass of water and ask God for the power to do."

In ordinary usage the Haitian refers to the various cults or "nations" as though they were quite separate and mutually exclusive. He speaks of the *service* Pétro, or *rite* Nago, or the *nanchon* Ibo. Yet in practice the cults are usually bound together into two or three major groups.

The "nations" belonging to the Vodoun (or Dahomey) group include the Arada or Dahomé, the Anago, the Mahi, the Aminc, and the Ibo. There is ample evidence that the cults of these "nations" were once separate and apart. Even today in isolated regions of Haiti there are cult centers devoted exclusively to Nago deities. Elsewhere, Mahi or Ibo services are held without the intrusion of "foreign" rites and deities. Some cult centers have several hounfors—one for Dahomé, one for Nago, one for Ibo, and so on, with a separate building for the "dead" spirit Gèdé. More often, however, one finds a single hounfor containing separate altars. Of all the "nations" within the Vodoun group, the Ibo perhaps has the most independent status, and in some regions it is tied in with Pétro rather than Vodoun rites.

The Pétro group also includes numerous "nations," some completely absorbed, others more loosely affiliated. Within this group, which for convenience may be called the Congo-Guinée family, are the Pétro, Bumba, Moundongue, Bambarra, Congo Loangue (Loango), and other "nations." In certain regions the Congo cult, like the Ibo, is regarded as separate and apart. Sometimes the Pétro service is kept distinct from the others, though it has drawn so heavily on them for its roster of deities that the distinction is not easily seen. In places such as Port-au-Prince where the cults have deeply infiltrated one another, major differences between the Vodoun and Congo-Guinée rites have disappeared, and altars to both Pétro and Dahomé deities may be found within the same hounfor.

It is not difficult to detect a certain pattern of regional grouping within the Vodoun and Congo-Guinée families. Within the Vodoun family are gathered "nations" from Dahomey, Togoland, and Nigeria, while in the Congo-Guinée cycle are "nations" from Central Africa, miscellaneous "nations" such as the Bambarra, and the Pétro cult which is regarded as "Haitian" rather than "African," but whose rites and loa have been recruited in large measure from other services.

One often hears of Kitta services, or Chango services, or Legba rites. These are not separate cults but simply rituals for specific loa.

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The loa, like the rites, vary somewhat according to region and to the practices of the individual cult priests. New concepts spring up, and they thrive in one locality while remaining unheard of in another. Yet many new concepts travel from hounfor to hounfor. As in the old days in Dahomey, the Vodoun priests sometimes make journeys to visit other cult centers. At one service near Jacmel, on the south coast, I met a houngan from Dondon in the far north and heard him discuss with the local cult chief the appropriate behavior of a loa who had mounted a servitor. The Dondon houngan declared that in the north the loa conducted himself differently. The Jacmel houngan parried with the remark that a loa's behavior is consistent. He said there were only two possibilities concerning the possession as described by the cult chief from Dondon: either the loa had been mistakenly identified, or another deity had attempted to impersonate him. Such exchanges hasten the spread of developing theology from one area to another. They also raise contradictions which remain forever insoluble.

That confusions and contradictions are not merely of Haitian making is made clear by Herskovits' voluminous study of the pantheons of Dahomey.[3] Each of the great cults—the sky cult, the earth cult, and the thunder cult—has its own explanations of the origins and functions of the deities; and even within one cult there are contradicting explanations. The Haitians have taken over, built upon, and diverged from a Dahomean system that contained its own contradictions. In adding to it the system of the Yoruba, with its parallelisms and similarities, they have made the whole picture more complex than ever.

3 [Herskovits, Dahomey. Cf. p. 350, Category 116. --Analyst]

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769 845 The dead twins are offered food in special earthen or gourd bowls. In any market place where pottery is sold you will find the joined marassa double or triple bowls. The annual rites for the marassas are routine, but once every five years there is a *grande service* for them.

It is not merely the twins of one's immediate family that are served, but twins—that is, the spirit of twins—in general. They are supplicated even when a family knows of no incidence of twins. In part, this precaution is a recognition that there may have been twins among ancestors long dead and forgotten. It is also recognition of a twin spirit as a separate force affecting all people. The twin spirit has been personified in the loa named Marassa. The child born after twins is believed by many Haitians to be even "stronger" and more to be placated than twins themselves. He is known as a *doçu* if a boy, *doça* if a girl. Their patron loa are known as Marassa Doçu and Marassa Doça. The patron loa of triplets is Marassa Trois. Triplets are regarded as a special category of twins. Some Haitians, in fact, believe that the twins are merely a partial manifestation of the group of three, which is completed on the birth of the doçu or doça. In the marassa feast, triplets are served in the triple clover-leaf bowl, as are twins in combination with their doçu or doça. It is also believed by some that the child born before twins is "weak" both in physical vitality and psychic powers, because his strength has been sapped by the marassas who have followed him.

[776] Marassa Doçu and Marassa Doça. The patron loa of triplets is Marassa Trois. Triplets are regarded as a special category of twins. Some Haitians, in fact, believe that the twins are merely a partial manifestation of the group of three, which is completed on the birth of the doçu or doça. In the marassa feast, triplets are served in the triple clover-leaf bowl, as are twins in combination with their doçu or doça. It is also believed by some that the child born before twins is "weak" both in physical vitality and psychic powers, because his strength has been sapped by the marassas who have followed him.

776 768 [184] For some Haitians the loa Marassa is the most potent of forces to be placated at the time of death. They hold that he is only incidentally the patron of twins and triplets. His significance is said to lie in the fact that he is the spirit of the first of all human children who died. And as the child precedes the man, Marassa is the first and foremost of all loa. When a service is held for Marassa, he is given foods and beverages that all children love.

769 Rites for the dead continue endlessly for the living. Before a child is witness to a death in his own family he may observe many rituals for the family ancestors, twins, and the unknown dead. For those who are a part of Vodoun, the cycle is a perpetual one in an endless system of integration and continuity.

775 776 764 Special rites are held to remove the loa from the head of a deceased person. It is believed that the spirit of a person who has not had his loa removed will be restive and perhaps will even cause difficulties for his family and his descendants. And there is also the matter of the loa's welfare. The *malt' tête* is, in a sense, a captive in the head of the person who has died. The head is his home. But should the corpse be taken to the graveyard without the loa's having been removed, the loa would refuse to be buried

764 766 793 776 [539] father when you were living. Continue to protect your family after death. If you need other services give abundantly to your heirs in order to obtain satisfaction. Oh, good father, good servant, good parent, good friend! Good-bye! Do not forget us as we shall not forget you."[11]

Then the houngan goes to the canarie, strikes it three times with a piece of palm bark, and chants an invocation to the loa and to God, while members of the family dance where they stand, shaking the green branches they hold. There follows an invocation to twins. After a number of loa [787] have "entered" the service, as manifested by possessions, the houngan undertakes to find out how death came to the deceased man. An assistant brings the sacred divining shells[12] of the dead man, and the officiating houngan throws them on the floor, pours tafia three times, and lights a candle. The shells are then consulted. Three times he goes through the procedure of casting the shells and consulting them. Later he announces [775] that "the death of Boss Marius is not the death of an ordinary man, that he is now resting in La Ville-au-Camp (capital of the loas which is 'under the water'), and that the loas will continue to protect his descendants provided that they show themselves worthy of protection."[13] There is more singing and ritual, and then the canarie is covered. The loa from the head of Marius has found a temporary resting place. A little later in the service "the houngan raises the canari as high as possible, almost as high as his face, as he repeats the last line: 'Where may I find refuge?' With a quick movement the canari is shattered. The food is scattered, the loas are satisfied, and the crowd breaks into disorderly flight. . . ."[14] A few hours later the body of the deceased is buried.

764 ● 184 776 It is obvious that these rituals vary a good deal according to regional practices and according to the importance of the persons for whom they are conducted. Furthermore, there is a good deal of difference of opinion among Haitians as to what actually takes place when the mait' tête is taken from the head of the deceased man.

793 764 184 Although the prêt' savane (bush priest) is subsidiary to the houngan at death rites, his is nevertheless a conspicuous presence. He may begin the services with prayers for the dead, in which the family joins, while the houngan remains in the background. Later, the houngan takes over. In certain regions, however, the prêt' savane is dispensed with altogther, his function being absorbed by the houngan.

764 As reported by Herskovits, the wake for the dead is one of the most important ceremonies in the death rites. He says:

[766] Wakes are held for all dead, even for very young children if they have been baptized, though if a baby dies before baptism, it is buried without ceremony in a little box in the courtyard of the habitation. . . . The wife and the children either stay

11 [This and the preceding paragraph are from Simpson, Op. Cit., P. 156. Cf. P. 350, Category 116. --Analyst]
12 [For footnote, see Category 116, P. 350. --Analyst]
13 [Simpson, Op. Cit., P. 159. Cf. P. 350, Category 116. --Analyst]
14 [Ibid., P. 161. Cf. P. 350, Category 116. --Analyst]

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with the corpse or are nearby with friends. The one who bathed the corpse remains constantly at its side as members of the family come and go, since the body must never be alone.[15]

But outside the house another kind of activity goes on. There the young people usually gather to sing gay songs, to play games, and to listen to stories. A professional storyteller, or a nonprofessional of repute, is called upon to entertain the children. He may give an entire night to Bouki and Malice stories, or to *contes* with interspersed songs in which the audience participates. Special singing games, stick games, and card games are played. But the drums are silent, both in the dead person's house and in the countryside at large. Rhythms for the game songs are provided by hand-clapping, or by vocal sounds which simulate percussion instruments.

Burial ceremonies vary according to local tradition and the status of the deceased person. Near the little fishing village of Petit Goave in southwestern Haiti, I witnessed a funeral cortege which might have been seen almost anywhere in the country. It was led by the widow of the dead man. She rode on a white horse, followed by four men carrying the dead body on a litter made of plain planks. There was no coffin, the body being covered only by its white shroud.[16] Behind the corpse plodded a group of twelve or fifteen peasants, friends and relatives of the dead man. Some of them had just come in from the fields and still carried their machetes in their hands. Others carried short *cocomacaque* sticks, which are believed useful for warding off baka and other demons who lurk along the path of the traveler.

The woman on the horse lamented loudly. When she came to where other peasants stood respectfully at the road's edge, she stopped her horse and faced them, raising her voice to an anguished pitch, calling on them to take note of her bereavement and of the fine virtues of the dead man. Some of the spectators whom she addressed, standing with their hats in hand, nodded and tried to say consoling words, such as "Oui Manman, li grand moune" (Yes, Mama, he was a fine man), or "Quand Bondieu vlé ou li prend" (When God wants you he takes you). A market woman with a load on her head suddenly became possessed by a loa as the cortege passed her. This seemed to increase the anguish of the widow, who lamented with increased vigor.

The four men carrying the corpse sometimes moved in a zigzag course, first to one side of the road, then to the other. When the procession came to a crossroad it stopped momentarily. The houngan, scarcely distinguishable from the other peasants in blue denim, came forward and stood in the center of the crossroads shaking his tiny hand bell and calling upon Malt' Kalfu (Master of the Crossroads) to grant safe passage. While he

[15] [Herskovits, op. cit., p. 208. Cf. p. 350, Category 116.--Analyst]
[16] [For footnote, see Category 116, p. 350.--Analyst]

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The yam

itself was transplanted from Africa, where in old times as well as in modern it was a staff of life among those who lived by agriculture. The word "yam" is known throughout large parts of Africa, crossing language lines and forests. It signifies the big root on which the African is so dependent, and it also has the general meaning of "eat." In Senegal it is called *nyami*, while across the width of Africa and in the upper Nile region it is called *nyam*.

In Haiti the yam is a tie with the past and a symbol of fertility. When the yams are plentiful, there is food for the winter months and a sense of well-being. When the yam crop is poor, there is insecurity and even hunger. Whatever occurs, lurking in the background is the shadow of the family ancestors, for it is they who have the power to enhance the crops or blight them. This is the concept around which the mangé yam is built.

The annual harvest feast, on the twenty-fifth of November, is rooted in the need for placating the ancestors, so that the dead will insure the fertility of the fields. Before the feast, no yams may be eaten, for the crop must be "baptized" first. Should this rule be violated the yams will spoil and those who eat them will become sick. The precise form of the mangé yam varies from region to region. Sometimes it is held on the premises of the cult chief for the community at large. More traditionally it is held on the family *habitation*, with a houngan in attendance. It is felt that an important obligation rests upon those who have wandered away from the homestead to return for the occasion. For the fate of the family depends to a large degree upon the successful appeal to the vast host of the ancestral dead, and the solidarity of the living in this effort is regarded as vital. Even if one belongs to a Christian sect which proscribes Vodoun, he is obligated and ready to come, for the welfare of the family is paramount. Catholics, Adventists, and Protestants alike participate. As the Haitians say, it is an affair for all who eat yams, and that means all Haitians.

Yams are washed and prepared for eating during the service. They are cut in small portions, placed in dishes or calabash bowls, and offered to the dead, who have prime rights. All categories of the dead are fed—those who are remembered, those who can be recalled only by name, and those whose names are forgotten. The dead of Haiti are invoked, then the dead of Africa. The marassa dead are fed from separate gourds or bowls, and a special table is set for the ancient dead who move slowly because of their age or infirmities, and who may take a long while to arrive at the mangé. A share of the yams is offered to the family loa. Then the members of the family receive symbolic portions. There is singing, drumming, and dancing, and sometimes ritual baths are taken. Afterward, when the yam feast is ended, the crops may be gathered, stored, and eaten.

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celebrated with elaborate rituals for the dead. As in Haiti, great importance is laid on the presence of all living descendants, whose numbers are calculated to influence the ancestors' behavior. And as in Haiti, the first yams and the first rice are offered to the dead, and only after the family ritual does the family divide the crop.[5]

Service for the Assotor Drum

The *assotor* drum is the largest and most sacred of all Haitian drums. Around it is built an impressive and elaborate service known as the *mangé assotor*, which, according to local traditions and circumstances, may be held as often as every three years or as infrequently as every twenty-one years. The period between mangés always consists of an odd number of years. A houngan from Jérémie declared the service might properly be held every three, five, or seven years. Another cult priest in the Cul-de-Sac Plain said it could be held every seven, seventeen, or twenty-one years. The assotor is known as the *plus grand moune* (the most venerable "man") of the hounfor. However, few cult centers possess an assotor. "Assotor c'est fort bagaille, c'est pas zaffai tout moune" (The assotor is powerful, it isn't everybody's affair), Haitians say. This is what a man from Jérémie tells about it:

"The assotor is the greatest of all things in the hounfor. The Rada drums are only for the Dahomey nation. The Congo drums are for the Congo nation. The assotor is a man of Dahomey, but he is for all nations. It is for all loa—Pétro, Congo, Bumba, Dahomey. The assotor belongs to Dahomey, but when there is a great service the assotor is the host to the loa of every rite, the loa of Haiti and of Africa. When the assotor is played, the loa are awakened everywhere. Loa who have been forgotten by the Creoles (Haitians) will come to the service and mount people, and when the loa have gone, many people don't know what loa has been riding them. Some ancient spirits from far away come only to the assotor service, and when it is over they aren't heard of again.

"The assotor drum is not for small things, it is for great occasions. For some people there are no occasions in their whole lives great enough for an assotor service. When all other things have failed, it is only then that the assotor is called upon.

"If a big houngan should have an assotor drum, he can have only one, and it is the chief of the hounfor. All other drums are its servants. You can make an assotor, but it is not necessarily an assotor. It may look like an assotor and not be an assotor. To be an assotor it must not only have the shape of an assotor but it must be accepted by the loa. There was a houngan near Jérémie who made an assotor and held a great service with it,

[5] [Informant: Albert Kofi Prempeh, Ghana. Cf. p. 351, category 116. -- Analyst] [115]

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comes quietly. Pié Cassé comes crawling because of his broken feet. Each loa comes in his own way.

"First there is dancing for the Congo and Pétro loa. There is dancing for the Kanga and Ibo nation. Last of all is Dahomé, for the assotor belongs to the Dahomé nation, and Dahomé is the host.

"The assotor service is the biggest of all services. It last fifteen days. Old people say that once there were services lasting more than twenty days. Every day, animals are killed—bulls, goats, pigs, chickens, turkeys—all according to the loa who are there to be fed. When Moundongue is fed, a dog's ears are clipped in his honor, because Moundongue is fond of dogs. More happens in the assotor mangé than all the rest of the year. Dahomé is host to the other nations, so the Rada service comes last. But the assotor drum is the host even to Dahomé, and it is fed last of all.

"The assotor drum is dressed in the finest of clothing and kerchiefs during the mangé. It is the king of everything.

"When the mangé assotor is ended, when the drum has been fed, there is an immediate Mass held in church for the souls in purgatory. You don't need to have any special reason, but you must hold the Mass for all the dead. You serve coffee, sandwiches, cake, and other refreshments for all the people.

"When there is no mangé going on, the assotor is kept in a special place in the hounfor. Every seven or nine months the houngan has a special *rappel* beaten for it on the Rada drums, and rum is spilled on the ground for it. It is a great responsibility to own an assotor. But it does great things for the houngan who owns it."[6]

Service for Maît' Grand Bois at Anse-à-Veau

Orthodox tradition in the region of Anse-à-Veau places the loa Maît' Grand Bois as the most potent and venerable of deities. He is the supreme mystère, whose good will or eccentric whim determines the fortunes of all men. Somewhat subsidiary to Grand Bois, but served within the same rites, are two other non-Dahomé loa—Moundongue (of Congo origin) and Ibo. Older people of Anse-à-Veau regard this trilogy, along with Femme Grand Bois (the wife of Maît' Grand Bois), as the core of "Guinée" ritual. There is also a second group of deities, consisting primarily of Ogoun Feraille, Êzilie, and Fréda Dahomé; these loa are of the Dahomey family and are regarded as somewhat less important. Should services for any of them be held, they follow rites for the Grand Bois constellation. People in this region hold that there is only one Ibo loa, one Moundongue, one Ogoun, and one Êzilie, each of them with many names or manifestations. Legba, the Dahomean spirit of procreation,

[6] [For footnote, see Category 116, P. 351. --Analyst]

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the gate, and the crossroads, is not regarded in the same light as the other loa but as a messenger and interceder, and as the crossroads protector. He it is who helps in the placation of the major gods, and who guards people against accident, chance, and evil spirits on the highway.

In traditional form, services for Maît' Grand Bois and Femme Grand Bois are conducted by the family without the aid of a houngan, under the direction of the oldest male member of the family. The rites begin on a Thursday. With a tiny bell in his hand, the elder who directs the service (he is called *grand famille*) calls upon Maît' Grand Bois to come and receive his feast. The procedures are solemn. The grand famille and the family sing. At last Grand Bois enters the head of the old man who is conducting the rites. Then the sacrificial animals are brought forward and killed, and the women take the meat and begin the cooking of the mangé. While the food is cooking, the family sits and waits. Sometimes the grand famille begins a song, in which others join. The cooking takes a long while. Sometime during the night, when the food is ready, it is placed in two baskets—one for Maît' Grand Bois and one for his wife, Femme Grand Bois. Into each basket goes meat, corn meal, rice, bread, cookies, peanut cakes, cassava, and other delicacies. The two baskets are hung by ropes from the roof of the tonnelle, or from the branch of a tree. During the entire night, none of the family eats. Maît' Grand Bois and his wife partake of the feast as they please. At six o'clock in the morning, the baskets are taken down, and the family is free to eat what the loa have left for them.

When the food is gone, the bones that are left are carried to a nearby stream and washed until they are white and shining. The bones are then placed in a large calabash bowl. Sweet-scented leaves from special trees are placed in the bowl with the bones, and water is added. The mixture becomes a ritual lotion, or "bath." The entire family kneels before the liquid, which they rub on their faces, heads, arms, hands, legs, and feet. When the ritual bathing is over, they sing:

La famille vin' payé sang,	The family comes to pay blood,
La famille vin' payé sang,	The family comes to pay blood,
Cérémonie là c'est finil [Ex. 41]	The ceremony is finished!

Afterward, each member of the family places a small coin in the calabash dish with the bones and leaves, and the residue is then buried in a deep hole at a crossroads. A heavy post (*borne*) is erected at the site, with markings to indicate the date of the service, and the numbers 1, 2, 3, 4, each representing a year. Every year one of the numbers is checked off, and at the end of four years another service for Maît' Grand Bois and Femme Grand Bois is held.

2: Courlander B-5 (1937-1955) 1960 SV3 Haiti SV3

588 does not marry his horse. People marry people. Loa marry loa. A man
588 may have a compact with a loa. That is not a marriage. Some of the
184 things that are going on down there in the Plain are not right. They are not the old way. In the old days we did things differently. We did not always run to the houngan. The grand famille knew how to talk to the loa. Up here we don't do things the way they do them down below in the city. People marry people. Loa marry loa."

588 Nevertheless, the practice in the neighborhood of Port-au-Prince and
776 the Cul-de-Sac Plain is for mystic marriages to take place when deemed
[184] useful, essential, or unavoidable. Foremost among the loa involved in these rites is Èzilie Wèdo, the "pure" one, the deity of love, sometimes identified with the Virgin Mary. Other loa known to have taken part in mystic marriages are Damballa, Ogoun, Ayida, Agwé, Gèdé Nimbo or one of his brothers, Cousin Zaka, and Général Clermeil. All these loa—significantly, I think—have clearly defined personalities; much is known about their character and behavior, their likes and dislikes.

588 A man married to Èzilie has special obligations to her for the dura-
[834] tion of his life. On certain days (especially Thursday, which is sacred to this deity), the mortal "husband" may not have sexual intercourse, even though he has a human wife.

588 Circumstances leading to a mystic marriage vary widely, but in each
755 case it is a cult priest who determines whether the rites should be
793 held. Perhaps a person has been afflicted with a series of illnesses or mis-
796 fortunes. He goes to his houngan, who begins a series of communications with the client's loa or with his own. Sometimes many loa are consulted before the desired information is available. Eventually it is determined that a certain deity, for reasons which may or may not
[753] be clear, wishes to have nuptial ties with the client. The illnesses or mis-
[777] fortunes that have been sent are a means of informing or warning the person concerned.

Sometimes the houngan relies on well-established divining methods to ascertain the cause of the difficulties. He may employ the *gembo* (a shell that slides on a string), ashes, or small shells that are thrown on
[787] the ground. Or he may rely on possession by a loa to provide the information.

If it is found that a loa is demanding marriage, arrangements are then made. The rites that follow may take place in a hounfor or at the house of the human bride or groom. Both a prêt' savane and a houngan officiate.

588 The person directly involved, like the loa, usually has something to
554 gain from a mystic marriage. For one thing, he can reasonably expect

Ibo nation, I am going to eat a large cock, oh, Ibo nation!
Ibo nation, I am going to eat a large cock!
Ibo nation, I am going to eat a large cock, oh, Ibo nation!
Waille waille waille!

The Ibo service is often a strictly family affair rather than a broad community ritual. The family replies to the Ibo loa in the following song.

La famille vin' payé sang,
Vin' payé sang!
La famille vin' payé sang,
Ibo Lazile volonté! [Ex. 41]

The family comes to pay blood,
Comes to pay blood!
The family comes to pay blood,
It is Ibo Lazile's wish!

The loa Nago frankly tells the people that if they want to come to his house (his shrine, or the hounfor) they will have to pay something for the privilege:

Si nou wè coté'm demeuré,
Si nou wè coté'm demeuré,
Fau'm payé bonbon pou' ça!
Anago Nago!
Vin' wè coté'm demeuré! [Ex. 67]

If you see where I live,
If you see where I live,
You have to give cookies for that!
Anago Nago!
Come see where I live!

The "dead" spirit Gèdé Nimbo, the guardian or master of the cemetery, who often engages in bizarre activities which poke fun at the codes of social behavior, is sometimes regarded as a special protector of children. Precisely because he is overlord of all that has to do with the grave, his good will is sought, particularly in behalf of the young; and in many services of the Nago rites his protection is bought by money gifts:

Gèdé main la'gent,
M'apé ba ou la'gent la'gent,
M'apé ba ou la'gent pou' ga'dé zenfants la yo!
M'apé ba ou la'gent pou' ga'dé zenfants la yo!

Gèdé, take the money,
I will give you money, money,
I will give you money to guard the children!
I will give you money to guard the children!

In the course of the ceremonies when, from time to time, the honored loa of the occasion enters into the head of one of the servitors, the houngan will place in the hands of the mounted person a lighted candle and a pitcher of water. The possessed servitor approaches the sacred center post and spills a little water on the ground for the deity. After certain other rituals, the houngan, or one of his assistants, conducts the mounted "horse" into the hounfor to the altar. In the following song, as the possession comes on, there is a call for a lighted candle.

2: Courlander B-5 (1937-1958) 1960 SV3 Haiti SV3

never seen again, and after a prêt' savane had read prayers over the spring the people again drew water from it.

Baka more often change themselves into gray or red pigs, but one ingenious baka was said to have transformed himself into a bicycle, which was seen traveling alone at night on the road from Port-au-Prince to Léogane.

Some people wear charms against the baka's malevolence; but the most effective weapon is the cocomacaque stick. The cocomacaque, or monkey palm, is a palm tree that grows only a few feet high. It has magical powers to drive off not only baka but other evil beings as well. When the tree is growing in its natural state, it is said, you must never mention its name in its own presence. Should you say within its hearing, for example, "Look at the cocomacaque," it will wilt and fall over, losing all its vital powers. The trunk of this midget palm is a favorite material for fashioning a walking stick or a short baton. A man going on a long journey into strange country may carry a cocomacaque stick with him to brandish at the crossroads where baka lurk, or to drive off strange animals that may be baka in disguise.

In their relationships with human beings, the baka are not always random. Sometimes, for a terrible price, they will undertake to make a man rich or to "eat" his enemies for him.

In some parts of Haiti, baka seemingly have found their way into the ranks of the loa. In the Congo-Guinée pantheon there is a deity called Bakulu Baka, or Babaku Baka. He is a malevolent spirit who "eats" people in the best baka tradition, and he lives, significantly, in the mapou tree, which is shunned by all good loa.

The *engagements*, or compacts, in which baka sometimes figure are usually made with another sort of creature, the *djab*, or devil. A djab is a manlike being but is superhuman, ferocious, and terrible. Some djab are small, some large, some innocent in appearance, some grotesque. They are supernatural sorcerers who deal out riches in exchange for human beings. A frustrated or desperate man may go to a djab and ask for a favor, which will usually be granted for a heart-rending price. Persons who appear to gain wealth suddenly may be suspected of having entered into an *engagement* with a powerful djab.

One story is about a man of Port-au-Prince who, needing a large sum of money, went to a famous djab who lives in a cave known as Trou Fourban. This powerful djab agreed to provide all the money required, but only on condition that the man deliver to him each year one of his children. The man suddenly came into a large fortune. But when the anniversary of his compact arrived, he did not go to Trou Fourban

R: Courlander R-5 (1937-1954) 1960 SV3 Hait SV3

many of his potions are of a mystical and 759
semiritual nature; yet from roots and leaves he brews specific medicines 755
for specific illnesses, such as rheumatism, fevers, malaria, worms, and 757
yaws. Sometimes his cures are effective, sometimes they fail. The leaf doctor is consulted for poisons and their antidotes, though many poisons, such as that in the wari bean, may be gathered and dispensed by anyone.

One of the macabre figures in Haitian folk belief is the *zombie*. In 775
the most general sense, the name designates the bland soul of a person who died without the distinction of having a loa in his head. The soul or spirit has no special will. It cannot affect the living in any way, unlike the lutin, the djablesse, and those who were buried possessed of mystéres. It does not harass enemies or importune its descendants. It is an undynamic, simple, otherworldly spirit, a sort of negative afterimage. It does not need to be placated or feared.

But the word *zombie* has another, more popular meaning, signifying 775
a human being who has "died" and been resurrected from the graveyard 789
by members of the Zeaubeaup Society, by a wicked sorcerer, or by some 754
other person who has realized the "power" to perform this act.

The Haitian countryside is full of tales about fresh graves that have been robbed of their bodies by practitioners of this special form of black magic. By a secret formula these soulless "dead" are revived and given a semblance of life. They lack only the power of will. Without that, they are at the complete command of the sorcerer who has disinterred them. They are presumed to be spirited away and put to work at drudgery in some remote place. Stories are told of plantations in the mountains whose entire labor force is made up of zombies, the animated dead. You can tell a zombie when you see him. His eyes are dull and glazed, he gives no sign of recognition to people he once knew, he moves slowly and plodklingly at his tasks, and he takes orders only from his master. He neither sings nor dances, and he eats and drinks without interest. His facial expression never changes. He is emotionally and mentally dead. Neither the rites of the Church nor those of Vodoun can help him. There is only one formula for breaking the spell. If he eats salt he will either regain full life or die a merciful death. The master therefore takes great care that his zombies never have salt. [183]

Haitians have many explanations of this mystical phenomenon. Some [184]
hold that the sorcerer has the unique power to revive the dead. Others believe that the victim is not really dead but has succumbed to a virulent poison which numbs all the senses and stops bodily functions but does not truly kill. Upon disinterment, the victim is given an antidote which restores most physical processes but leaves the mind in an inert state, without will or the power to resist.

2) Courlander 8-6 (1907-1954) 1960 572 Hait 972

The connection between the Haitian zombie and certain soulless beings of West Africa is quite apparent. Herskovits has observed that in Dahomey there are tales of persons thought to be dead who were found wandering in far-off places. These individuals had no memories of their former lives. "They were soulless beings, whose death was not real, but resulted from the machinations of sorcerers who made them appear as dead, and then, when buried, removed them from their graves and sold them into servitude in some far-away land."*

According to stories told by some Haitians, in ceremonies for the dead where there is suspicion that the deceased was the victim of this particular kind of poisoning a close relative stabs the body with a knife before burial to assure that it will not become a zombie. In other instances close [illegible] keep over the grave for a number of days and nights, so that the body cannot be stolen.

Some members of the elite publicly dismiss the whole business as savage fantasy but privately say something like: "I don't believe in this sort of thing, but how can you explain the case of Marie Zamham in Cap Haitien?" And then they will tell of curious events of which they have firsthand knowledge.

There are numerous legends of persons who died and were buried, only to reappear perhaps years later in some mountain village, or in the big city of Port-au-Prince. An educated man in Port-au-Prince declared that a dead cousin of his reappeared one day in the city ten years after her burial. He tried to speak with her, but she answered only haltingly and gave no sign of recognition. After this one appearance, he said, she was never seen again. Another Haitian from the north told of a graveyard watch in his village to prevent disinterment of the grave of a young girl who had just died. The two watchers dozed fitfully, and suddenly awoke to see a man removing the girl's body. When they jumped to their feet and went after him he escaped into the shadows. But the girl staggered about, fell to the ground, and gave birth to a baby. Both the girl and her newborn child were taken to the village and given salt to eat. Both of them recovered.

One villager from the southern mountains reported that in his travels he came upon a coffee plantation on the sparsely populated mountain called Morne la Selle, and found all the laborers to be zombies. They did not sing as they worked, their movements were slow and cumbersome, and they did not sweat in the hot sun. When he asked for a drink of water, no one replied. While he stood trying to converse, the master of the plantation came with a hard leather whip and angrily ordered him to leave.

* [Herskovits, Dahomey, II, p 243. Cf p 351, Category 116. -- Analyst]

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When they are not working, it is said, zombies are tied with special ropes made from the leaves of the banana tree. One popular song goes:

> Nous Lôngane
> Yo mariré zombie nans paille fig-banane!
> Absolu wye-oh!
>
> Ils Lôngane
> They tie the zombie with banana straw!
> That is all, *wye-oh!*

Some Haitians tell you they know there are zombies because they have seen them. Not too many years ago a visiting writer stoutly declared that she, too, knew there were zombies because she had seen one—in the [illegible]. Although her reasoning was not quite airtight, the possibility that mental defectives are sometimes mistaken for zombies is worth considering.

Houngans who "work with two hands" are reputed to be able to gain permanent control over persons by means of a formula known as *tuyé-lévé* (kill and raise). Either for himself or a client, the houngan gains power over the victim by "killing" him through special magic and then "removing the soul" (*retiré n'âme*). The victim, presumed to be normally dead, is buried by his family; the houngan then retrieves the body and "restores the soul" (*metté n'âme*). With his soul restored, the victim has, in effect, become a slave of the houngan, who can do with him as he wishes. He differs from a zombie in that he has a soul, whereas the zombie has none.

Some Haitians believe that even one who has died a nonmagic death may be raised from the dead. To accomplish this, the houngan or bocor stands over the body, goes through a specified ritual, and calls out the dead person's name: "Albert Moreau! Albert Moreau! Albert Moreau! Lèvé non! Lèvé non! Lèvé non!" ("Get up! Get up! Get up!") Then, it is said, the dead man may awaken.

It is believed that a houngan may also command the souls of dead persons to perform services for him against an enemy. The souls at his disposal for this work are those which he keeps in earthern jars in his *hounfor*. Should he wish to plague an enemy, he will send one of these souls to the man's house to make him sick, or lazy, or insane. Usually, the man does not know what is happening to him; but if he becomes aware that a dead soul is working on him, he attempts to find out which houngan has sent it. Perhaps the houngan can be bought off. If not, another houngan may provide relief.

While some believe in the reality of the various demons and specters,

others only half believe, and many look upon these creatures as imaginary but exciting to talk about.

The zombie finds a favored place in the tales children make up to tell one another, and the traditional song played by children on the earth bow or mosquito drum goes:

Maringouin pinga zombie oh, Bobo Maria!
Maringouin pinga zombie!
Maringouin pinga zombie, pinga zombie, pinga zombie, pinga zombie, pinga zombie!
Maringouin pinga zombie! [Ex. 92]

Mosquito beware the zombie, oh, Bobo Maria!
Mosquito beware the zombie!
Mosquito beware the zombie, beware the zombie, beware the zombie, beware the zombie, beware the zombie!
Mosquito beware the zombie!

Or they may sing with great bravado, to the clapping of hands.

Chaingadaing, nou pral mangé zombie!
Chaingadaing, trau trau!
Chaingadaing, nou pral mangé zombie!
Chaingadaing, colocoto!
Chaingadaing, nou pral mangé zombie!
Chaingadaing, kalainkaintaing! [Ex. 93]

Chaingadaing, we are going to eat a zombie!
Chaingadaing, trau trau!
Chaingadaing, we are going to eat a zombie!
Chaingadaing, colocoto!
Chaingadaing, we are going to eat a zombie!
Chaingadaing, kalainkaintaing!

R: Courlander B-8 (1927-1955) 1960 SV3 Hait SV3

[P 105]

8. *Mardi Gras and Rara: Jugglers, Maypoles, and Kings*

From early in January until Easter, each year, the Haitian countryside is infected with a riotous carnival spirit that puts all else in the background. First comes Mardi Gras, beginning early in January and building to a great climax at Shrovetide. And then on Ash Wednesday begins the seven-week festival known as Rara, Lwalwadi, or Chariopié.

Every week end in the Mardi Gras season the country roads and villages are alive with special music, dancing bands, and traditional kinds of masquerading. The little crossroads in the mountains where the *habitants* usually hold their markets are suddenly swarming with drummers, trumpeters, magicians, jugglers, masked dancers, and acrobats. Each band has its own name, its banners and paraphernalia, new topical songs composed for the occasion, and sometimes a dance virtuoso. Each roving band competes for the attention and admiration of the spectators, and its ranks are often swelled by passers-by moving in the same direction who choose to dance their way along the roads rather than walk. Often women and girls on distant market errands will join in the celebration, seemingly unencumbered by the heavy loads they carry on their heads.

The Mardi Gras of the mountains and the plains is a dynamic spring rite of which the urban elite version is only a pale and feeble imitation. There are no pretty floats, no exhibits of female beauty, and no Coca-Cola advertisements. Sometimes the country bands move into Port-au-Prince and join the urban activities.

One by one the spectacles pass by on their uncertain way—to north or south, into the town or out of the town, wherever chance leads them. In addition to the musicians, acrobats, jugglers, and masked dancers, there are baton twirlers, comedians on stilts, and mimes. Each group has its own theme. One may call itself the Zendbeaups, another the Cochons Gris, another Cochons Rouges—names designating legendary

2: Courlander 8-5 (1937-1965) 1960 SV3 Haiti SV3

and covered with tiny mirrors or bits of colored glass. The towering headdress of antlers or papier-mâché sculpture unavoidably recalls similar headdresses in West Africa. Each roi has his own style of dance, which is usually accompanied by drums. It may be a belly dance, a dance of delicate balance, or one of complicated footwork and semiacrobatics such as the imitation of a pair of scissors at work. Throughout the dancing the headdress remains majestically erect.

In addition to the roi Lwalwali and the mâit' Rara (who is constantly in the midst of things, blowing his whistle), there are other traditional Rara personalities: the *major jonc*, who juggles with a metal baton (sometimes two or three of these jugglers work together), and the *jongleur*, a juggler or strong man who performs such feats as dancing while holding a fully set table off the ground with his teeth.

On the southwest peninsula, in the region around Jérémie, there is a splurge of wrestling exhibitions during Rara days. Known as *pingé*, this festival wrestling is done with a background of excited drumming and has a striking resemblance to wrestling traditions in West Africa. Local "champions" will invade a neighboring community, sometimes traveling considerable distances to make a challenge. As in West Africa, some of these wrestlers take their own musicians with them. The musicians often are provided by the village in which the events take place. If a challenge is accepted, the spectators form a large circle, with the wrestlers in the center and the musicians to one side. There may be drums and bamboo flutes, occasionally supplemented by large earthern jars and lengths of bamboo beaten with sticks. The wrestlers are dressed only in shorts. When a man is thrown, the event is over, and another pair of wrestlers takes over. Sometimes a "champion" will take on a series of opponents until he is tired. Afterward he may move on to another community to find new competition, perhaps accompanied by a large group of friends and supporters from his own village. When the Rara season comes to an end, pingé is over for the year. It is one of the few athletic sport activities of the Haitian peasant.

And now and then during Rara a *debois* is seen. The *debois* is a carved wooden marionette with a short handle below. Its arms and legs are moved by pulling a string. It is usually painted, and sometimes it is dressed. One debois observed was provided with a loose dresslike costume; when the string was pulled, a large phallus hinged into view in an erect position. This marionette was an object of endless funmaking among spectators.[2]

Another type of marionette is the "Two Kings," made of papier-mâché and operated with strings. The "Two Kings," sitting in a papier-

[2] [Footnote appears in category 16, p. 351. --Analyst]

2: Courlander B-5 (1937-1955) 1960 SV3 Haiti SV3
[P.112-QQ]
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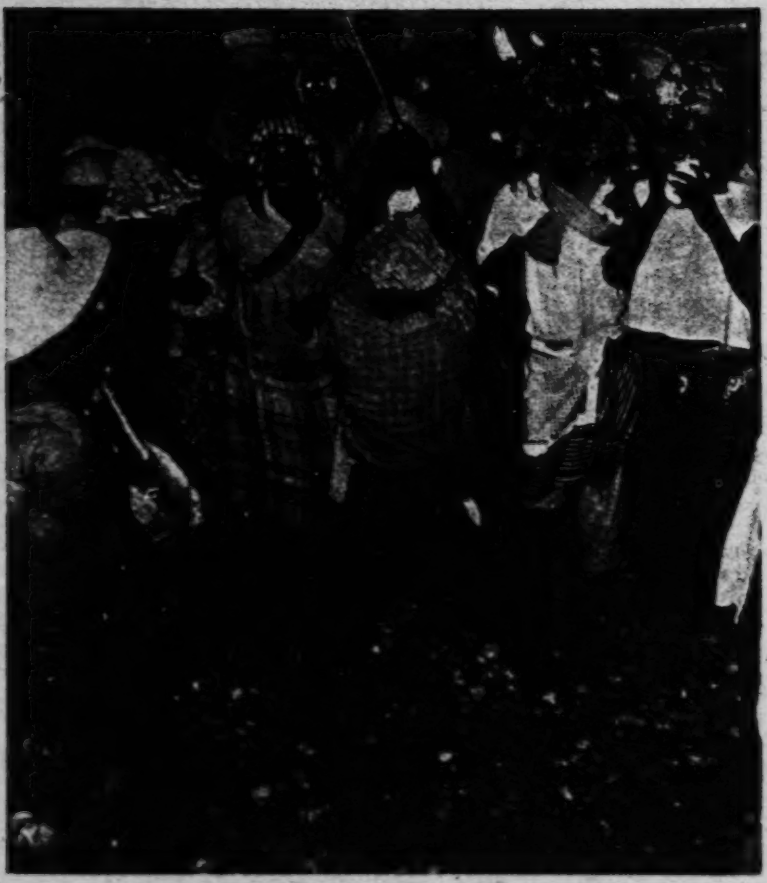

[184] [171] *76. A Rara group near Plaisance. The costumes differ from those in the south. Note the Madras waistcloths, reminiscent of West African dress.*

2: Courlander B-5 (1937-1955) 1960 SV3 Haiti SV3

And when the revolution came he produced for the Haitian armies knives, gun parts, and wheels to transport cannon. By the tens of thousands he made ingeniously devised metal objects to be thrown on the roads, before the French cavalry troops—objects so shaped that, no matter how they fell, a single sharp point stood erect to cripple the enemy horses. Yet knowledge of the West African uses of iron did not altogether disappear, and during the first century of independence the Haitian blacksmith created many old-style knives, spears, and ritual objects for the cult temple.

Even today, some of this old-style work is to be found in hounfors in the southwestern peninsula. One may see simple or ornate iron standards, made to support ceremonial offerings or candles, strikingly similar to standards in ancestral shrines in Dahomey. There are iron bells, both single and double, made in pure West African style; ornate ritual swords and sabers which are the crests of certain deities; coiled and uncoiled iron serpents representing the gods Damballa and Ayida; and stylized or semirealistic portraits of the deities. Many of these old pieces are nineteenth-century survivals; others have been forged within the past decade. ZA

An over-all impression of Haitian material culture is that artistic decoration is almost entirely absent and that the prime emphasis is on utility. Wooden cooking spoons are efficient in form, but missing from them is the delicate decorative carving often found in West Africa. The long wooden washing bowl, or *gamelle,* and the wooden mortar in which grain is pulverized are likewise clean-cut but stark and plainly utilitarian. Clay bowls, bottles, and storage jars are usually of simple, uniform design, with only accidental variations; there is little use of glazes, and the clay is often heavy and thick. Should there be a wari gameboard in the peasant hut, the chances are that it is roughly made, without legs or carved designs. Dugout canoes are usually crude in appearance, heavy and thick-walled, and irregular in form.

Yet there are many evidences—though one must seek them out—that esthetic impulses are quite alive. The gay peasant straw knapsack, or *alfor,* without which no mountain man makes a journey, has a charm and grace that is not diminished by familiarity and cheapness. Decorated with sisal braid and tassels, and colored with green and magenta dyes, each *alfor* on close inspection appears to be unique. In some communities in the south and southwest, burlap squares also are painted with these traditional dyes. About forty inches across, and made of sugar bags, these paintings swarm with geometric patterns and sometimes with figures of flowers and animals. They are purely decorative, being

ZA [See plates 42-51, pp. 112-DD—112-FF.--Analyst]

2: Courlander B-5 (1937-1955) 1960 SV3 Haiti SV3

used for wall hangings much as appliquéd cloths are used in Dahomey. Near Cap Haitien, in the north, ceramic workers make crude clay figurines of roosters, pigs, dogs, cows, and people. The "purpose" of these figurines is obscure, but it is likely that they are intended for use in Vodoun ritual, a number of them having been observed in hounfors in the vicinity of the town of Grande Rivière du Nord. In some mountain villages, canes carved with animal and human heads are commonly seen. Nor is the tradition of carving gourds and calabashes, popular in various regions of West Africa, altogether forgotten. The *cayambouque*, a divided calabash with the top ingeniously cut to fit into the lower part so as to form a sealed container, is sometimes covered with carved geometric designs, usually crude and haphazard but on occasion meticulous. Until recent years the common *cha-cha*, or gourd rattle, was similarly carved.

Most of the visible traditional art is to be found in the environs of the cult temple. The inner walls of many hounfors are covered with ritual designs and symbols and portraits of the deities. On the altar, sometimes, crude wood carvings of deities are seen, along with forged iron objects, carved marassa bowls, and grotesquely shaped drumsticks known as *baguettes guinée*. All the wooden objects are characterized by a plainness that relegates them to the category of purely functional and expendable things. The wood carving of a deity is not an image, it is a representation; it can be sold or otherwise disposed of, even thrown away if infested with beetles, and another object can be used to replace it. The only concern of the cult priest in this matter is that the deity concerned should understand the situation properly and not take offense. Thus there is no strong feeling that the wood carving should be a realistic representation or that it should be "beautiful." One relatively antique wood carving, completely West African in style, was found some years ago in a hounfor near Léogane and is now in the collection of the Musée du Peuple Haitien in Port-au-Prince (see fig. 57).

One of the most flourishing arts of the hounfor is the *vèvè*, or ritual drawing made on the earth in the course of a service. Most commonly these beautiful and ornate designs are made with white meal or flour, and in a few of the cults, primarily the Pétro, lampblack and red brick dust are also used. The vèvè is made by the houngan or the mambo. With sure, practiced movements, the cult priest allows the meal to trickle through his fingertips onto the ground where the rites are taking place, usually in the peristyle of the hounfor itself. The drawings he makes are composed of a multiplicity of cabalistic symbols—heart shapes, stars, interlocked V's, flags, abstract phallic forms, crosses, swords,

2: Courlander B-5 (1937-1955) 1960 SV3 Haiti SV3

machetes, circles, mortar shapes, and so on—each with its own specific meaning. Sometimes the vèvè becomes openly pictorial, and there emerges a ship for the loa Agwé, snakes for Damballa and Ayida, a bull for the loa Taureau, a knapsack for the loa Azaka, or even a portrait of a deity, perhaps smoking a pipe or holding a sword.

The vèvè is not a permanent record. It is made as an act of supplication or veneration, and once it is finished it has no further value. In the ensuing ritual and dance, the vèvè is obliterated by the feet that pass across it. At the hands of one houngan, this invocational act results in a crude, even childlike, design. At the hands of another, it produces a drawing of beauty, integration, and highly developed form.

The drum-making craft, too, has offered an unbroken sequence of opportunity for satisfying artistic urges. The drum has a traditional form that cannot be tampered with; its shape is predetermined by its function, by the log from which it is hewn, and by existing standards. And yet, the drum maker has found it an object on which he can devise new decorative motifs, and he may even give it personal uniqueness. Some drums have styles that may be associated with specific regions of the country, others bear the stamp of the individual artist. Paint has been used on Haitian drums for a hundred years or more as a complement to carving. One assotor drum dating from the earliest days of the Republic, and now preserved in a collection owned by the Bureau of Ethnology in Port-au-Prince, is decorated with a medallion showing the Haitian coat of arms, grenadiers, red and yellow snakes, and a sun with a face. This magnificent instrument, apparently the only one of its age and kind to have survived the years, is one of Haiti's art treasures.

The *conis*, or calabash bowl, of the hounfor rites is another object which is decorated with motifs. Abstract designs, ritual symbols, and sometimes human and animal figures are painted on the inner or concave surface of the bowl.

The rural traditional arts of Haiti have had a belated impact on the arts of the city. Within the past fifteen years there have appeared a number of painters, sculptors in wood and ceramics, and ironworkers who constitute an art movement sometimes referred to as the Haitian "renaissance." Many of these artists draw heavily on national lore and legend for inspiration and subject matter. Some of them are men who came only recently from villages or distant farms. Their work adorns many public buildings in Port-au-Prince and is eagerly sought by art collectors. Members of the elite class who once looked with embarrassment on the "primitive" countryside are finding increasing respect for the potentialities of their country cousins.

2: Courlander B-5 (1937-1955) 1960 SV3 Haiti SV3

535 older man, they leaped into the air and came together in mock combat. First one would strike and the other would parry, then the second would strike and the first would parry, always in time to the beating Congo drums. On another signal all six dancers leaped into the air vertically, twisting into a full turn each time, landing in position to strike and parry.

Spectators standing around the dancers clapped their hands and sang:

[539]

Mousondi na fai la guè!
Éya éya éya!
Nous c'est nanchon la guè!
Ou pas tendé canon'm tiré?

Mousondi, we will make war!
Éya éya éya!
We are a nation of war!
Don't you hear my cannon shooting?

[293] When the dancers and drummers seemed fatigued, they were offered rum to drink. The dancers drank without breaking step or interrupting the battle. The bearded man held the lip of his glass between his teeth, and without using his hands to steady it, tipped his head back and let the rum run into his mouth, all the while stamping his feet and leaping with the others.

[184] I was told later that the Mousondi was from the north, and that the dancers were recent arrivals from Port-de-Paix. But some of the older people declared that in former times the dance was known in the south by the name Calinda.

114 535 The Calinda dance, like the Vodoun, the Pétro, and several others, is mentioned frequently in the old literature on Haiti, Trinidad, Martinique, and Guadaloupe. It has been described variously as a funeral dance, an exhibitionistic sexual display, and a stick dance. It was reported by Saint-Méry as a dance in which men and women paired off. Early in the eighteenth century, Père Labat described it as a line dance, with the women on one side and the men on the other. Lafcadio Hearn saw it as a stick dance. And the word Calinda appears sometimes in songs of the Vodoun cult. The name may have lost specific meaning early in the life of the colonies; but it is more likely that early chroniclers used the term inexactly to refer to a multitude of different dances. In Haiti, [595] identification of the Calinda has been further confused by the existence of the Calinda secret society, which had special dances of its own, all called Calinda.

Although confusions and contradictions exist, the testimony of older Haitians is that the Calinda was a stick dance, known also by the name Mousondi.

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17. Children's World: Gage Songs and Games

On the night of last prayers for a deceased person, and on other party occasions, children while away the hours until bedtime with special songs and games. Sometimes the games are led by an older member of the family. More often, left to their own devices, the children play unsupervised. It is regarded as fitting that the youngest members of the community should be enjoying themselves while the last rites are being held for one who has recently died. This view is held not merely in regard to children; older people, too, engage in gay activities, such as dancing the Juba.

533 524 764 [535]

Many children's games are known throughout the country, others have only a regional popularity. The games mentioned here are among those played in southern Haiti, mainly in the neighborhood of the capital, Port-au-Prince.

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One favorite is known as Balancé Yaya. The children—as few as four or as many as ten or twelve—crouch on the ground in a circle. Each of them has a stone in his hand, which he strikes rhythmically on the earth as they sing together:

524 [533] [539]

Jésus, Marie, Joseph oh,
Rat là mangé pigeon moin.
Jésus, Marie, Joseph oh,
Rat là mangé pigeon moin.
Rat passé, Robinette passé,
Fai' ti Marie marché, allé là. . . . [Ex. 129]

Jesus, Mary, Joseph, oh,
The rat has eaten my pigeon.
Jesus, Mary, Joseph, oh,
The rat has eaten my pigeon.
The rat goes by, Robinette goes by,
Make little Mary walk, go there. . . .

2: Courlander B-8 (1937-1955) 1960 SV3 Haiti SV3

[P. 189]

18. *Musical Instruments*

The Haitian people have drawn heavily on both Europe and Africa for their musical inspiration. In music, as in other traditions, the country is bicultural. There is, on the one hand, the music of the so-called *élite*—the literate and educated class which is concentrated in the cities—and on the other hand, the music of the peasants, the plantation laborers, and the lower economic groups of the town. The *élite* music is in the European or Western tradition, while the true folk music of Haiti follows, in the main, in the wake of West African musical culture. The instruments of *élite* music are primarily those of Western Europe. The instruments of the folk music of the country are those which can best interpret the mainstream currents of the West African heritage—instruments of African design and function. European-style instruments have infiltrated into the folk music too, but the over-all pictures is that of a survival of African musical devices to interpret music cast in an African mold. It is the folk-music instruments which call for examination—the instruments that are made in the villages and tiny huts in the mountains, the instruments on which the significant music of Haiti depends.

The materials from which these instruments are made are usually those found upon the land. If a man wishes to make a drum, he cuts down a tree for the purpose. For material for a bamboo trumpet he goes to the bamboo grove. For a flute, he cuts a reed. Metal is used for making African-style bells, rattles, singing horns, and substitutes for bamboo trumpets.

The drum in its many forms is the most common instrument of all. It is used for dances of all kinds, for cult rites, for work music on the road and in the field, and for assembly calls and signals. Not very many years ago the older people in the south of Haiti still spoke of the "talking drums" they had seen as children.

The craft of drum making is a very skilled one, but the tools are

[P. 191]

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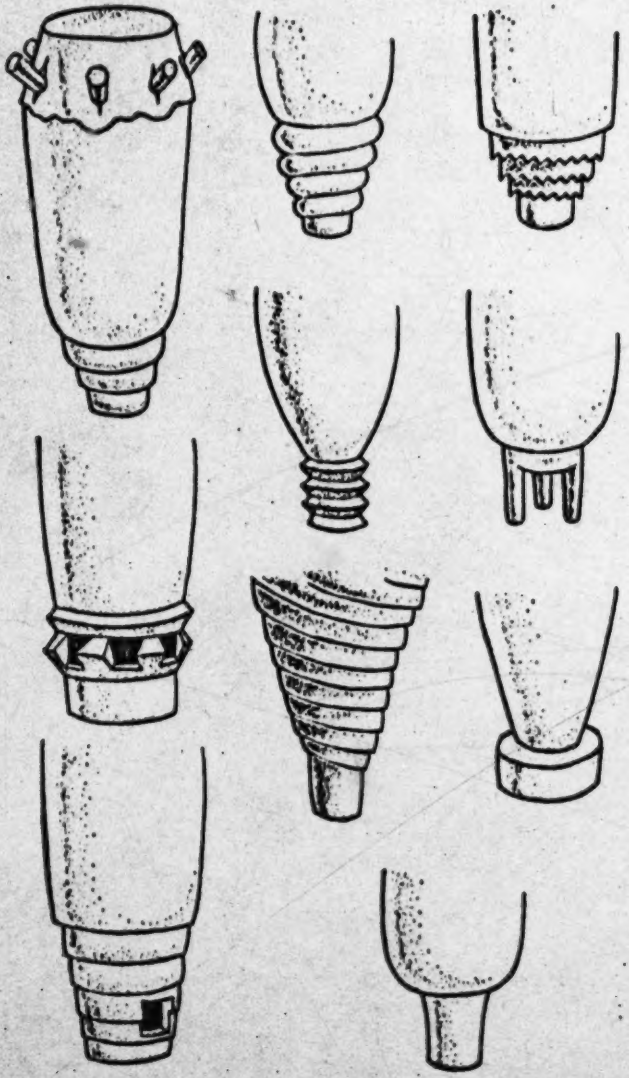

INDIVIDUALITY IN DRUM DESIGNING: Although the Arada or Dahomey-style drum is distinct from those of other "nations" or cults, there is a noteworthy variety of artistic decoration in the carving of the base. Some patterns are found only in certain regions or villages.

high. The smallest—the *bula*, or *bébé* (sometimes called *dundun*)—is about eighteen or twenty inches high. They are all called sometimes by the Yoruba name *bata*, originally applied to a two-headed instrument.

Arada drumheads are of cowhide, held in place by hardwood pegs set into the bodies of the drums at an angle. The drums are tuned by driving in or loosening the pegs. Even the slitting of the skins where the pegs pass through them is African in pattern. In Cuba the drums of the Arada (there called Arara) cult are made in precisely the same way, though they are used in batteries of four rather than three.

In a variation of the peg type of fastening, the skin is attached to a hoop, which, in turn, is held in place by ropes laced to the pegs. Each drum maker has his own preference as to the angle and size of the pegs, the proportions of the drums, and the wood from which they are made. One drum maker near Léogane claimed to be able to identify the region from which a drum came by examination of the pegs and the carvings around the base.

The small Arada drum, the *bula*, is usually "whipped" with two long thin sticks to provide a sharp and penetrating sound. The middle-sized drum is played with one bare hand and a stick. The stick may be straight or bowed. The bowed drumstick is known as an *agida*, the name used for the same type of stick in Dahomey.[1] On infrequent occasions the *moyen* drum is played with two sticks—one straight and one bowed. The large drum, the *manman*, is played by the most accomplished of the drummers in the orchestra. He plays with one bare hand and one stick, which may be of various forms. It may be straight, have a hook-shaped head, or be mallet-shaped; or it may be the grotesquely twisted stick known as a *baguette Guinée*. All these forms are known in Dahomey and elsewhere in West Africa.

The three Haitian Arada drums, supplemented by an African-style bell known as an *ogan* and small gourd rattles (cha-chas), form the standard orchestra for most dances of the Vodoun cult. The *ogan*—the forged iron bell with an external striker—has all but disappeared in recent years, along with the institution of the village forge. In its place one may see any kind of metallic object, such as a hoe blade, a link of chain, or a length of pipe, all of which are referred to by the old name *ogan*. In Cuba the Arada cult preserves the bell, both in single and double form, under the same name. The word *ogan* probably derives from the Yoruba term for this instrument, *eganran*.

Playing in concert, the three Arada drums produce a range of tones, and the player of the *manman*—the chief of orchestra—adds to the effect by frequently striking his stick against the side of the drum above

[1] [Herskovits and Herskovits, Suriname Folk-Lore, P. 89. The stick is also known in Suriname. Cf. P. 353, Category 116. -- Analyst]

2: Courlander B-5 (1937-1955) 1960 SV3 Haiti SV3

in construction but stands a little shorter. Two Pétro drums of slightly different sizes and tones, called *baka* and *ti baka*, in combination with one or more rattles, an iron percussion device, and sometimes an assot, make up an orchestra.

The *assot* is a small board which is beaten with sticks. Often these sticks are flat, and sometimes a small wooden bench is substituted for the board.

Dances for which the Congo or Pétro drums are used include Pétro, Kitta, Bumba, Salongo, Bambarra, Moundongue, Congo Loangue, Pastorel, Mousondi, and Moutchétché. The drum for the Congo Loangue dance formerly was somewhat taller and narrower than the present Pétro drum, but the distinction is no longer maintained.

The Juba, or Martinique, drum is similar to the Pétro or Congo but wider and squatter. It is laid on its side for playing, the drummer sitting astride and pressing his heel against the drumhead to mute it or change the pitch. For Juba or related music, a second man, called the *catalier* (the one who *catas*), beats sticks against the body of the instrument behind the drummer.

In the northern part of Haiti one also finds the Zesse drum, used exclusively for the Zesse dance. It is cylindrical, about thirty inches high, and is played in an upright position. A wire is stretched across the goatskin head in the manner of a snare drum. Like all drums with goatskin heads, it is beaten with the naked hands.

A large two-headed drum called the *tymbale* is used as a work drum for labor societies and for processions, and in combination with other drums it sometimes appears in the Juba and secular Congo dances. The heads are mounted on hoops, which are held fast by lacing. The drum is carried by a rope slung over the shoulder or around the neck. Sometimes an assot striking board is affixed to the body of the drum.

A miniature copy of the tymbale is called a *tambourine*. It is used in carnival dances, notably the Mascaron. Carried by a cord which hangs around the neck, it is played with two diminutive sticks. Drumming is primarily a man's prerogative, but during carnival days women or girls may be seen playing the *tambourine*.

In southwestern Haiti, and possibly elsewhere, special drums are used for the Manuba dance. The Manuba drum is about a foot long, cylindrical, and about five inches in diameter, with two drumheads held together with cords. A pair of these drums is joined by a rope about two feet long, which is hung around the neck so that the two drums are in convenient playing position on the chest.

Twin drums which are hung over the knee are known as *marassas*—The Haitian word for "twins."

2: Courlander B-5 (1937-1955) 1960 SV3 Haiti SV3

easily be hidden, but the ganbos were simply slipped into the straw roofs and thus put out of sight. Moreover, by some strange process of reasoning, military authorities regarded the bamboos as "harmless," though they were used for the same purposes as the contraband drums.

There are numerous other kinds of simple percussion devices. One such instrument, now less commonly seen than previously, is a length of open bamboo laid in the crotches of two Y-shaped sticks set in the ground. Like other *catas*, the bamboo is beaten with two sticks. Some Haitians believe that in former days such bamboos were played in batteries like a xylophone.

Sometimes a light-weight wooden cylinder, or perhaps a drum denuded of its playing head, is carried by the timekeeper of a coumbite. It, also, is played on the side with sticks.

Wooden mortars for pulverizing grain take on the character of musical instruments when used in combination with voices. When two or more mortars are used, with two men or women wielding the long polelike pestles in each mortar, the rhythmic effects can become fairly complicated.

The *claves* or *palos* (small hardwood sticks) are used primarily in connection with secular dances of a Cuban type, or to accompany such instruments as the guitar and the marimba. One stick is held loosely in the natural fold of the hand, so that it is free to vibrate, and is struck sharply with the second stick. The tone is almost metallic because of the hardness of the wood, usually lignum vitae. The name of the instrument is recognizable as a form of *clavar*, or *clavo*, Spanish for "peg" or "nail." It is thought that wooden shipbuilding pegs provided the name for this device, which has equivalents in West Africa.

Among the folk instruments there are various kinds of horns and trumpets. Cows' horns are played musically in some parts of the southern peninsula, though usually they are used as ritual instruments and signaling devices. Wooden trumpets called *pistons* are carved from the stems of the papaya tree. Conch-shell trumpets, known as *lambis*, are commonly used as signaling devices by fishermen. They are also to be found among the coumbites, in Rara festivities, and occasionally in rituals, where they are usually identified with sea deities. In carnival times the old fashioned phonograph horn makes its appearance as a combined trumpet and voice amplifier.

Probably the most important of the trumpets is the one made of bamboo. It is called a *vaccine* or *bois bourrique*. Both names have interesting origins. The cow's horn was at one time used for magico-medical purposes. The leaf doctor used it as an "applicator" of powders and potions. A small opening was made in the point of the horn, and

[See plate 8, P. 112-F. --Analyst]

During Rara season two special rattles are used. One of them is made of metal and resembles a tin can with a wooden handle. The metal sometimes is perforated with numerous small holes, and inside are *hoholi* seeds, which act as rattlers. This instrument, known as a *tchancy*, is usually decorated with colorful ribbons when in use. (In northern Haiti the term *tchancy* is used to designate metal wrist rattles worn by drummers.) The other Rara rattle, called *jouconjou* or *joucjou*, is made of three gourds carried on a long pole. One of the gourds is affixed to the end of the pole, and the others are fastened to the terminals of a short crossbar, giving the effect of a cross with bulbous ends. Since many of the Rara processions are dramatizations of the Christ epic, the instrument could be interpreted as a Christian symbol, though its conversion into a noisemaker appears to be an African conception. The *jouconjou* may be a variant of the small rattle-cross which is used by the Abakwa secret society in Cuba.[8]

The sacred gourd rattle of the cult priest is called *asson* or *baksor*. It is pear-shaped and covered with a network of beads which act as external strikers. It is used by the houngan to summon the spirits of the dead, to praise or call upon the deities, and to accompany the performance of magic. The asson is of West African derivation, and its counterparts are to be found among the cults of Martinique, Trinidad, Cuba, Brazil, Venezuela, and elsewhere where African traditions have left their mark. The gourds from which the assons are made are grown in a special grove sacred to the loa.

A large calabash rattle has been reported from several isolated regions of Haiti, primarily from the north. Some rattles of this kind have been described as more than twenty inches in height and covered by a network of external strikers, usually wari beans. The calabash rattles are used in groups of three. They are shaken and thumped against the palm of the hand, producing both deep and high-pitched sounds. These oversize rattles are employed without drums and are said to be associated with Arada-Nago rites. They appear to be a survival of the instrument known among the Yoruba as the *shèkèrè* and are found in Cuba in both Dahomey and Lucumí (Yoruba) cult centers.

Probably one of the oldest of Haitian folk instruments is the earth bow, known as the *tambour maringouin*, or mosquito drum. Traditionally the mosquito drum is made in the following way:

A hole is dug in the earth, perhaps a foot or more deep. It is covered with palm or banana bark, which is pegged firmly all around. A cord is attached to the center of the bark membrane and drawn taut to a bent green sapling, one end of which is buried in the ground at a slight angle. The cord is plucked and snapped with the fingers of one hand, while

[8] [See Courlander, "Musical Instruments of Cuba," Musical Quarterly, April, 1942, pp. 233-234. Cf. p. 354, Category 116. -- Analyst]

534 [541] Among the noisemakers heard mostly at the time of the Rara festival (usually on Good Friday) are the *von-von*, or bull-roarer—a thin flat piece of wood whirled on the end of a cord—and the *rara*, the common wooden ratchet. Various types of wooden flutes, usually of bamboo, are also used.

[184] In the remoter parts of the mountains you may now and then hear of an instrument known as the *banza*. A century ago, it would appear, the *banza* was a stringed instrument resembling a banjo. The similarity of names is striking, in view of the instrument's early form. Today, [177] however, the word *banza* is applied to the homemade fiddle which is used to accompany the minuet and other old dances of European origin.

534 524 178 A children's instrument seen sometimes in the mountains is constructed of half of a calabash shell, across the opening of which have been stretched a number of cords. This plucked device appears to be a decadent form of the African trough zither.

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[P. 317]
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1. The Pantheons

Most of the loa of Haiti appear to belong to two major cult groupings: the Vodoun (dominated by Dahomé rites and traditions) and the Congo-Guinée (dominated mainly by the Pétro deities). In the Vodoun pantheon one finds deities of Dahomean and Yoruban origin, and others whose names seem to identify them with West African peoples such as the Mahis, the Aminos, the Adjas, the Foulas, the Sousous, and the Haoussas. The so-called Congo-Guinée group, in addition to the Pétro escorte, appears to have absorbed many loa from Central Africa. Among the Congo-Guinée loa are such names as Mayombé, Loango, Bumba, Moundongue, Mousondi, Angole, Congo, Baganda, and Solongo, all of them designations of regions or tribes of the Congo area. Also in this pantheon are loa bearing the names Bambarra and Siningal (Senegal), from northwestern Africa.

It is not possible to group the loa in such a way that the system will reflect accurately the tradition and usage in all parts of the country. Had all the old cults or "nations" survived intact, the pantheons might have resembled the following:

Arada or Dahomey loa
Anago or Yoruba loa
Mahi loa
Congo loa (including the Moundongue, the Solongo, the Bumba, etc.)
Ibo loa
Kanga loa
Pétro loa
Etc.

In certain parts of Haiti, in scattered and isolated places, one finds Congo, Ibo, and Nago cults that have resisted absorption; but this pattern does not hold for most of the country. In general, Congo and Pétro tend to "march" together; Anago has become a "nation" within

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a "nation" in the Dahomé rites; and the Ibo group, though still distinct, is frequently allied with the Dahomé rites or the Guinée rites.

The following list does not pretend to include all the loa known in Haiti. It is doubtful that a complete list could ever be compiled, in view of the continual generation of new deities and the constant cross-fertilization between "nations." The loa are grouped here according to most widespread usage. There are contradictions from which there is no possible escape, and these general groupings will not necessarily correspond to the concepts and practices of any specific locality. It is intended here to give a broad and generalized view.

Under "The Vodoun Pantheon" I have placed constellations of deities of Dahomean and Yoruban origin, along with others that are clearly identified with Vodoun rites. Under "The Congo and Pétro Pantheons" I have listed the Congo-Guinée loa—consisting mainly of deities associated with Central Africa and deities affiliated with the Pétro rites. Ibo and Kanga loa are grouped together, because in many regions of Haiti the two pantheons appear to be interlocked. A separate listing is given for the Simbi family of water deities in view of their ambivalence; they are sometimes found in the Pétro group and sometimes in the Dahomé, according to local practice.

THE VODOUN PANTHEON

DAMBALLA WÈDO, or DAN WÈDO. One of the most venerable of Haitian loa. He is generally recognized as the husband of Ayida Wèdo, though occasionally the two deities are merged in a personality called Damballa-Ayida. The concept of a single identity for Damballa and Ayida conforms to Dahomean belief. In both Haiti and West Africa, Damballa is identified with the rainbow and is symbolized as a snake.[1] In Haiti he is associated also with rainfall, springs, and fertility. He is sometimes described as "white," and the proper food offering to him is a white chicken. Persons possessed by Damballa usually take on stylized characteristics of snakes. Along with many other important loa, he has become identified with characters in Christian religious belief. There are, in fact, "two" Damballa Wèdos. One, identified with Moses, comes in talking; the other, identified with St. Patrick, never talks. Food offerings for the St. Patrick version of Damballa consist of eggs, flour, sugar, and almond syrup. Damballa remains one of the chief gods of the Dahomey cult in Cuba, and he survived into the last century in New Orleans under the name Danny.

AYIDA WÈDO. Generally regarded in Haiti as the wife of Damballa, Ayida is also symbolized by snake and rainbow, and her color, like Damballa's, is "white." In Dahomey and Nigeria, Ayida is known as a male rather than a female spirit and is regarded there as the same divinity as Damballa, or Dji. In Dahomey, Ayida Wèdo was the great serpent who held up the world. According to one myth, the Creator of the World assigned to Ayida the task of holding up the earth to keep it from falling into the sea. The great serpent coiled himself, tail in mouth, and lay below

[1] [Herskovits, Dahomey, II, 245 ff. Cf. p. 354, category 16. --Analyst]

[The Vodoun Pantheon]

any iron object, such as a sugar vat. In West Africa, Chango (or Shango) and Ogoun were considered separate deities. In Nigeria, according to Ellis, they were brothers, closely associated with each other. Among the Yoruba, Chango was a thunder-and-lightning god and he is believed to have been one of the early kings of Oyo. The African Chango, like the Haitian, is identified with fire, a corollary of lightning, and persons possessed by him may carry pots of fire on their heads and perform other fire tests.[11]

Chango Gold. Another manifestation of Ogoun Chango.

Ogoun Bachango. Possibly the same as Ogoun Chango, or he may be named after the Bachangos, a Congo tribe. A warrior and ironworker.

Ogoun Balizal. One of the Ogoun family.

Nibbo Nibbo. One of the Ogoun family.

Archabé, Achabé, Chabé, or Chabé. One of the Ogoun escorte, sometimes called Ogoun Chabé, or Chabé Bocor.

Ogoun Yebioux. One of the Ogoun brothers.

Obatala, or Batala. A loa of war. Among the Yoruba people of Nigeria, Obatala was a sky deity and protector of the town gates. He was thought to form children in the womb and was therefore believed responsible for albinism and congenital deformities.[12] Obatala and Chango are among the main Lucumí (Yoruba) deities in Cuba.

Ogoun Bayé. An aspect of Ogoun who functions as a gateway guardian.

Ogoun Blanc (White Ogoun). He does not drink rum, which is a favorite beverage of his brothers.

Ogoun Jebba

Ogoun Jekka, Jekkí, or Yekkí. A warrior and ironworker. Jékkí may have been a shrine or regional designation.

Ogoun Kladik

Ogoun Kénédie

Yalodé, or Ogoun Loodé. Brother of Ogoun Badagry and the other Ogouns. Yalodé is clearly of Dahomean origin.[13]

Ogoun Panama, or Ogoun Palama. Guardian against sunstroke, or spirit responsible for sunstroke. A brother of Ogoun Badagry. He is usually seen wearing a Panama hat.

Ogoun Pierre Nabitue

Ogoun Manniga (Ogoun Red Eyes). A malevolent Ogoun brother, red eyes being a mark of bad behavior. Some people feel that he is a member of the Pétro rather than the Vodoun pantheon.

Nago Pimient. A member of the Ogoun escorte. He eats hot peppers.

Boclacha Nago

Gédé Nimbo, or Nimbo, also called Baron Gédé. One of the powerful deities of the Vodoun pantheon, particularly in the region of Port-au-Prince, where many houmfors cater extensively to him. Gédé Nimbo, along with his numerous brothers and his vast escorte, is a "dead" loa, a spirit of the graveyard, a sexual rascal, and a violator of propriety. He is served apart from the other loa, and usually he has a separate altar or shrine outside the central houmfor. Cult centers for Gédé are often near graveyards, though not necessarily so. Gédé services abound around the main cemetery of Port-au-Prince. Gédé Nimbo has various manifestations, but he is usually

[11] Ellis, The Yoruba-Speaking Peoples, p. 47; W. R. Bascom, in Introduction to record album Drums of the Yoruba of Nigeria (New York: Ethnic Folkways Library, 1950). Cf. p. 354, Category 116.—Analyst

[12] Ellis, The Yoruba-Speaking Peoples, p. 38 ff. Cf. p. 359 (cat. no. [illegible])

[13] Ellis, The Ewe-Speaking Peoples, pp. 111-14; Herskovits, op. cit. I, 39 ff. Cf. p. 354, Cat. no. 116.—Analyst

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[The Vodoun Pantheon]

Aïzo. A snake deity.

Bamoula. A lwa who likes the Raboule dance.

Calebasse. Lwa of the calabash tree.

Cinlao Pouvèlè. An ancient male deity. Herskovits suggests that he may represent the leopard, *sèbo* being the Fon word for that animal. The wildness of the attack on the sacrificial animal by persons possessed by Chèbo supports this conjecture. A deity called Dada Sègbo is prominent in the Rada Cult of Trinidad.

Simbi. A male lwa who is believed responsible for fine physical proportions and bodily strength in men.

Coupe-Nan-Dlaye. Probably the same as Coupi-Nan-Mer (Agwé).

Akodja. This lwa may well be the King Agonlo of Dahomey who was said to be responsible for the coming of *vodu* (lwa) into that country. Herskovits tells a legend about a woman named Hwandjilo who prevailed upon the king to bring the *vodu* from the kingdom of Adja.[1] Hwandjilo herself survives in Haiti under the name

Wanalé, or Hwanalé

Linglessou. A rainbow lwa. Persons mounted in sight of a rainbow are thought to be possessed by this deity.

Bamchoseu. "Marches" with Linglessou.

Wangol, also called Alowe Wangol (King of Angola). This lwa appears to be an interpolation from the Congo area.

Alowe, or Gonaïves. A masculine, dwarflike spirit who likes to discourage things and play practical jokes. Persons possessed by Alowe may break up gatherings, discommode spectators and dancers, and generally make a nuisance of themselves. Some Haitians regard this lwa as belonging more to the Nèvo pantheon than to the Dahomé.

Molè' Bois (Master of the Woods). May be an interpolation of Molè' Grand Bois of the Congo-Guinée pantheon.

Molè' Dlaye (Master of the Water). May refer to the lwa Simbi.

Dan Wimi, or Wimi. A lwa known in the Artibonite region. The name is possibly a corruption of Dan White.

Dja Kfoé

Ibo, or Nèg' Ibo. The name is that of a tribe on the Calabar coast of West Africa.

Pierre Pilates. Said to be the son of Pierre Boisin.

Général Yanvalou, or Jean Baptiste. Probably the Christian name of some Dahomé lwa.

Grand Lanmarèz. An aged, dwarflike lwa, guardian and protector of children.

Grand Alaso, or Alonzo

Grand Alonzonnon, or Monsieur Alonzonnon. Believed to be a lwa who was maît' tête of the Emperor Dessalines. Some informants consider this spirit to be a démon or loup-garou rather than a lwa.

Hounsou. The spirit of the Arada drums. There is a difference of opinion on whether Hounsou is a lwa in the precise sense or merely a drum spirit. The term is sometimes used to designate the largest drum of the Arada trio.

Jean Baptiste. A lwa well known in the region of Léogane. When he "comes," the possessed persons talk *langage* into a *canarie* (clay water vessel).

Molè' Dantò. This lwa always talks immaculate French, and persons possessed by him read cards and tell fortunes.

[1] [Herskovits, Dahomey, I, 104. Cf. p. 354, Cat. 116.—Ed.]

2: Courlander B-S (1837-1955) 1960 SV3 Hall SV3

[The Congo and Pétro Pantheons]

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Wanol. (King of Angola). He also appears in other rites.

Yonsol, or Mayombé. This name is a tribal designation, referring to the Mayombés of the Congo region.

Wangol Dlaay (Wangol of the Water)

Mouwoumouye. Often considered to be a "hard" loa. Ritual service to him includes, on special occasions, the cutting off of dogs' ears and tails. He is fond of dogs and is benevolent toward them. The name derives from that of a tribe of the upper Congo region. [782]

Ti Mouwoumouye. Said to be a "son" of Mouondongue.

Mouwoumouye Mouwaille. A member of Mouondongue's family.

Balaclou, or Bilakou. A loa identified with the morning star, also called Baiacou. There is also a town in Dahomey by this name.

Gauda, or Bagauda, also called Nzg' Gauda. A deity taking the name of the Gauda people of Uganda.

Congo Yamboah. A benevolent loa associated with curing and protecting the sick. Certain curative medicine bundles are called yamingaus. [755]

Macaya Bumba, sometimes called Caya. He takes his name from the Bumba people of the upper Congo River region. The Bumbas are near neighbors of the Mouondongues.

Mayo Bumba. One of the Bumba family.

Mouzoul Mouwoumouye. One of the Mouondongue family.

Roi Loangoua (King of Loango). Refers to the old African kingdom of that name.

Nanchoué. A warrior deity.

Ardahalé. Known primarily in northern Haiti. [784]

Dan Pétro. A rather malevolent loa, from whom the Pétro cult takes its name. The mangé for Dan Pétro is a pig. Early observers speculated that Dan Pétro was originally a powerful houngan of prerevolutionary days.[93] [982] [973]

Ayida Pétro. A Pétro version of the Vodoun Ayida Wédo.

Barelle Bara, known in some regions by the name Pingo Mana. He is a malevolent spirit who "eats"—i.e., destroys—people. Some informants are inclined to believe that Bakulu and Pingo are separate loa, both of a variety akin to baka or démons.

Barelle Barak. Related to Bakulu Raka.

Baguanda Tasha. He is visualized as a sea crab. *Taille bas* in Creole means "low hips" and is used to describe a dance posture. The surname Taille therefore may describe the movements of this loa as he moves about like a crab. [992]

Balaie Balaie

Baron Ghédéon, or Ghédéon Baron. He is enormously large and ferocious in appearance. A special loa of the country people. Although stern, he is fond of children. He is symbolized as an owl; his home is in the chandelle tree. His physical description suggests that he may be a deification of the epic folklore character Brise Mantaigne, or Break Mountains.

Chamanga

Congo Jiberou (Congo Red Eyes). A malevolent male spirit. Loa with red eyes are always of bad character.

Congo Mouwoumouye, or Mouwoumouye. A malevolent spirit.

Congo Savane, or Congo Zombi (Congo of the Plains). Malevolent, fierce, and

93 [Saint-Méry, Danse, p. 48. Cf. p. 354, Cat. 116. — Author]

2: Courlander B-6 (1937-1964) 1969 SV3 Haiti SV3

2. Games

THE GAME OF CAILLE, OR WARI

524 171 (184) The African counting game played with beans or stones in a carved wooden tray (known in various parts of Africa as *wari, mungala, adi,* etc.) is still known and played in the southwestern mountains of Haiti, particularly in the region south of the Léogane Plain. In Africa the game has innumerable variants. Most often the carved playing board or tray has two rows of six, seven, or eight holes, or pockets, sometimes with a large pocket at each end for winnings. In Ethiopia the playing board consists of three rows of six pockets each. In the upper Congo region a form of the game uses a board of twenty-eight pockets in four rows. Among wandering herding peoples in East Africa the holes are simply dug in the earth, and for playing pieces stones or dried camel droppings are used. The game not only is widespread throughout Africa but has an ancient tradition in Indonesia, the Philippines, southern and southeastern Asia, and the Arabic Middle East.

In Haiti the game is usually called *caille,* or "house." It is played on a long, sixteen-hole board of the kind used in West Africa. The playing pieces are usually maize kernels, dried peas, or wari beans. Where wari beans are used, the game is sometimes called by that name. This is a curious syncretism. The wari bean itself is so named because of a black marking which looks like a smile, in Creole *wa ri* ("going to laugh"). There are several ways of playing wari in Haiti; all have the common objective of capturing pieces on the opponent's side of the board. This is referred to as entering his "house" and "eating" the occupants, a terminology that is employed elsewhere where the game is known.

524 One method of playing is as follows. Starting with four pieces in every hole, a player takes up all the pieces from any hole on his own side of the board and redistributes them in a counterclockwise direction, dropping one into each hole as far as they will go. When his last piece is

2: Courlander 8-6 (1937-1960) 1960 8V3 Haiti 8V3

dropped, he picks up the contents of the next hole and continues the re-distribution. Should his last piece eventually fall into an empty pocket, his turn is ended and his opponent begins. However, if his last piece falls into a hole containing one or two pieces, he "eats" those pieces along with the piece which he places there. He continues the play as before, starting with the following hole, monopolizing the play until he ends in an empty hole. The one who takes the most pieces wins. In some Haitian variants of the game, each person's play is limited to the distribution of the contents of a single hole.

THE GAME OF MAYAMBA

This game, like *caille*, appears to be of African origin. It is played with four chips made of shell, baked clay, or broken chinaware. One side of each chip is white, the other usually blue. Any number of players may participate, and, as in dice, all compete against the thrower. *Mayamba* has a strictly gambling incentive. If a player throws two whites and two blues, or four whites, or four blues, he wins. If he throws any odd combination he loses.

2: Courlander 8-6 (1937-1953) 1960 SV3 Hahi SV3

relations between the husband and the wife's family, it is nevertheless commonplace for men who can afford it to have more than one wife.

[3]Simpson, in "Sexual and Familial Institutions in Northern Haiti," *American Anthropologist* (October-December, 1941, p. 656), observes that in northern Haiti there are three distinct types of plaçage. "A *femme-caille* shares her mate's house, while a *maman pitite* is a woman who has born children for a man without living in his house. A *femme placée* does not live in her consort's house, and she has given him no children." Although none of these women has any legal rights of inheritance, Simpson notes, "moral claims to a man's property stand in descending order for these three classes of plaçée."

[4]Johnston, *The Negro in the New World*.

[5]UNESCO, *The Haiti Pilot Project*, p. 18.

[6]Simpson, "Haitian Peasant Economy," *Journal of Negro History*, October, 1940, p. 515.

[7]The group work patterns of Haiti show a common ancestry with Negro gang work patterns in the United States. While nothing as formalized as the coumbite persists among American Negroes, similarities are striking. The emphasis on rhythm, the swinging of hammers or picks in unison, the need for a singing leader, the responsive chorus, and the frequent use of some kind of percussion to keep time, all derive from a common concept of the nature of group work.

[8]Herskovits, "Some Aspects of Dahomean Ethnology," *Africa*, Vol. V (July, 1932), pp. 266-296.

[9]Cardinall, *Tales Told in Togoland* (p. 109), observes that among the Krachi people of Togoland "no man may have sexual intercourse with a woman for seven days before he goes hunting."

[10]An Ashanti story told by Rattray in *Akan-Ashanti Folk-Tales* credits the hedgehog with rescuing the original hoe; according to this version, the hoe escaped across the sea to the country of the white men, who then possessed the secret. Afterward, the white men brought many hoes to Ashanti.

Chapter 11: *Dancing and Dance Drama* (*pp. 126-156*)

[1]Quoted in Courlander, *Haiti Singing*, p. 73.

[2]Actually a banjo-like instrument of African provenience. The similarity of the word *banza* to *banjo* appears to be more than a coincidence.

[3]Saint-Méry, *De la danse*, as translated by Lillian Moore in "Moreau de Saint-Méry and 'Danse,'" *Dance Index*, October, 1946, p. 238.

[4]Moore, *op. cit.*, p. 238.

[5]Brandy or rum with gunpowder is sometimes drunk by persons possessed by the loa Ogoun, deity of war.

[6]Moore, *op. cit.*, p. 238.

[7]United Nations photograph no. 62269.

[8]Students of United States Negro life will recognize the word *coundjolle* as a variant of *coonjine*, a dance known on the lower Mississippi. According to one observer, Dr. Willis James of Spelman College, Atlanta, small Negro boys on the docks used to call to the boat passengers:

> "Throw me a nickel
> Throw me a dime
> If you want to see me
> Do the coonjine."

The term *coonjine* is still used to mean hand-loading of cotton bales on river boats. When this loading was done mainly by hand some years ago, the stevedores worked rhythmically in a line and sang. An old man from Louisiana testified that within his own memory the dockside *coonjine* was accompanied by makeshift drums and other percussion.

3: Leyburn Z-4, 5 (no date) 1966
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citizen would admit. The few cities and towns of Haiti do not contain more than 250,000 people in a total population which the atlases generally put around 2,500,000. Since to live in the city is one necessary mark of aristocracy, and since obviously not every town- or city-dweller is an aristocrat, it is probably nearer the mark to infer that not more than two or three per cent of the people are of the élite.

A slightly larger group would fit neither category. This intermediate section would consist chiefly of those who have taken a few steps toward the upper stratum; they may wear shoes and keep a small shop and speak a few words of French, but not yet be accepted in "respectable" society; aristocrats will look down on them while the masses will regard them with curious interest. Yet these are not what Europeans would call a middle class. In their own generation, they are rootless and insecure. Their children will have as many advantages as the parents can afford, so that the next generation may increase the distance between itself and the common folk. Included in this intermediate group are also a few who, having once been up, are now on the way down.

If the terms "masses" and "peasants" are used interchangeably in these pages, it is because the vast majority of the people get their living from the soil. Haiti is, as it has always been, an agricultural country. The end-paper map lists all towns which claim as many as 7,500 people; only one, the capital, Port-au-Prince, has more than 100,000.[7]

At least nine out of ten Haitians, therefore, lead rural lives and easily fit the designation of peasant. They live in little communities, generally of less than a hundred persons, rather than in scattered houses. A detailed map would be dotted with place names of these

7. The estimates made by Woodring, in his *Geology of the Republic of Haiti*, p. 67, are as follows:

Port-au-Prince	125,000	Saint-Marc	10,000
Cap-Haïtien	20,000	Jacmel	10,000
Les Cayes	15,000	Port-de-Paix	7,500
Gonaïves	12,000	Jérémie	7,500

It should be noted that all eight of these towns, which by Woodring's estimate have a total of 207,000, are seaports. The country is so mountainous that no cities have grown up in the interior. The map also includes a number of towns smaller than 7,500: these are capitals of *arrondissements* or seats of courts. Woodring remarks that if the people who live in towns having a population of more than a thousand were added to the list above, the total "urban" population then would be between 225,000 and 250,000, which is barely ten per cent of the total in the country.

3: Leyburn Z-4, 5 (no date) 1966
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tiny communities, some of them designating "villages" of only four or five houses. For numbers of peasants hidden away in the valleys or on mountain farms, the only contact with the larger world comes through visits to the nearest market town—which itself may count only a thousand souls. The peasant is thus effectively isolated. The American Financial Adviser to the Government has estimated the average *annual* income of the Haitian at $20 a head.[8] The smallness of the sum limits the material contacts of the peasant with the outside world. Rural schools are few,[9] consequently all but a small percentage of the rising generation is growing up illiterate. Lack of mental stimulus completes the isolation. Bound to the soil by the need of wresting a livelihood from rocky, gullied, and increasingly unproductive land, harassed by ill-health, and governed by a group whose own security would be threatened by improving his lot, it is little wonder that the peasant is unprogressive, or that he struggles along at a bare subsistence level."[10]

Haiti is rural and agricultural, then, with a population density of about 250 per square mile. The people, living without machine industry and with very little foreign trade, must get their living from 10,000 square miles, not of lush tropical soil but of rocky, mountainous country which, after a century and a half of poor farming, has been stripped of most of its forests and much of its topsoil.

A glance at a relief map of the West Indies would show clearly that the islands are the tops of a mountain range, whose lowlands were long since submerged by the Caribbean Sea. Looked at from above, Haiti seems a jumbled mass of mountains running in all directions.[11] Down their slopes flow many small streams which after

8. Dr. W. W. Cumberland, cited by Paul H. Douglas, "The American Occupation of Haiti," *Political Science Quarterly*, XLII (1927), 258.

9. The average monthly salary of $13 (until recently only $6) for rural schoolteachers would not draw many wide-awake young men, even if schoolhouses existed for classes. The salary, indeed, is so small that only inferior persons are attracted, often men who know little more than their pupils. See chap. XV, 3.

10. Mrs. Blair Niles, in *Black Haiti* (New York, 1926), pp. 185–186, tells of a prisoner who preferred to remain in jail rather than be freed. "When he gets out," she quotes the officer as saying, "he'll be in again. You'll see. Here he gets nine cents a day for food, an' that's more than the average Haitian ever has."

11. One can well believe the story (told by Ebenezer D. Bassett, *Haiti* [Washington, 1893], p. 3) of the English admiral who, asked by George III for a description of the island, crumpled a sheet of paper, threw it on the table, and said: "Sire, Haiti looks like that." The same tale is told of Puerto Rico, with a Spanish admiral speaking to Queen Isabella.

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175 423 up so many of these, there was no way short of a revolution to reconstitute the now parceled estates. Obviously the Code did not envisage the control of serfs by small property owners, yet there were more small owners than large.

175 184 466 In the third place, the Spanish-speaking masses of the eastern part of the island had never experienced the kind of forced labor with which most Haitians had been at one time or another familiar. Their noncoöperation made enforcement difficult.

175 647 Finally, the administration of so detailed a plan called for the establishment, at once and yet in complete order, of a fully trained corps of bureaucrats, perfectly coöperating with each other, most of them educated, and all incorruptibly honest. If every literate person in the state had been drafted for service, Boyer could not have filled all the offices required by the Code.

175 465 434 After brief and piecemeal experience with the law in operation, moreover, even the few remaining large landholders turned against it. While they approved the provisions for forced labor, they discovered that to turn over to the workers a quarter or half of the annual crop, in a falling world market, gave too slim a profit.[42] Without the support even of its original sponsors, failure of the law was inevitable.

173 648 652 These factors alone would have been enough to kill the Code; but its real death blow came from an entirely different quarter. The year before the agricultural laws were passed, Boyer had achieved what he considered to be a political master stroke. He had made a financial settlement with France whereby Haiti, in return for a large sum in cash and regular annual payments for sixty years thereafter, should receive full recognition of independence from France; also the former mother country would renounce all claims to any properties in the country. Boyer had felt that the chief debilitating influence on the political and economic life of his people was the constant dread that France might one day return to claim her lost colony. To rid the nation of that incubus, therefore, seemed to him a high feat of statesmanship, no matter what the financial cost.[43]

[433] [247] 42. Coffee, now the staple crop of Haiti, was meeting competition from the other coffee-producing countries of the world. To put the sugar manufactories into working condition again called for more money than was available.

[643] [645] 43. Boyer's hand was forced to a certain extent by France, which had been exerting diplomatic pressure upon Haiti; the President, however, seemed to regard the settlement as a distinct coup.

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against almost unanimous public opinion opposing enforcement. In 1828 it was reported that dancing, which the Code had strictly limited to week ends, was a nightly diversion near the capital. One of the principal dancing resorts was the house of a captain of rural police, the very man who was supposed to repress such amusements.[45]

Boyer had done his best, and his best was merely a good piece of office work. When his Code failed to operate, he could think of nothing further to suggest for the economic rehabilitation of Haiti. The last fifteen years of his administration witnessed a gradual lapse into that small-scale farming which was to be characteristic of Haiti for the remainder of the nineteenth century. By comparison with former standards, production and steady industry had both fallen off since Boyer came to the presidency. The testimony of visiting foreigners is unanimous on the decline of industry.

The British consul, Mackenzie, said in 1827 that there was very little field labor then being done, and that only elderly people, principally aged "Guinea Negroes" long accustomed to steady work, carried on the tradition. No measures of the government could induce young people born in Haiti to labor or to change from their "habitual vagrancy."[46] Another Englishman, James Franklin, remarked in 1828 that land values throughout the republic had greatly declined because no one could make a profit within any moderate time. Labor was high, he writes, for ordinary wages did not attract the workers who preferred idleness. (This word is certainly unfair: it was work at their own bidding which they preferred, not idleness.) Government lands lay untilled, no one evincing the slightest desire to purchase or utilize them. Franklin continues:

> Land also in the possession of individuals is similarly circumstanced; and those who are large proprietors cannot effect a sale of any produce which they may have beyond the quantity which they can consume; consequently a proprietor may have an immense extent of land, and yet be quite unable to derive any benefit from it by cultivation, or to convert it into money, for the want of purchasers. Thus . . . there is no individual wealth in the country, because, although a man may have very large landed possessions, still those possessions are unavailable, for they produce him nothing, as he can seldom find persons disposed either to occupy or purchase them.

45. Although dancing is spoken of here as an amusement, it is highly probable that at least a part of it had connection with the Vodun religion.

46. Charles Mackenzie, *Notes on Hayti* (London, 1830), I, 100. Mackenzie is clearly exaggerating, unless by "field labor" he means work on plantations, in contrast to farming on small plots.

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ress. Others point out the difference between the lower-class Negro of the large commercial towns and the black peasants who live in the plains and mountains. The former, in contact with the roughest of white sailors, are a disgrace to any people, while the countryfolk, seeing only a select few of the whites, appear "to have an innate idea of the white man's superiority," and so treat him with respect. The peasants, according to these speakers, have all the virtues and vices of "wild races": they may acquire a kind of French varnish, but they are "essentially an African people removed from their parent country."[11]

There are among the élite broad-minded, tolerant, and cultured persons. The average member of the caste, however, like the average American, is full of prejudices of all kinds. Travel produces a superficial polish; their patriotism consists of antagonism toward the outside world and an effort to secure position for themselves; they are sure that Haiti's laws are sounder, her culture superior, her schools more advanced, her civilization in general higher, than those of most other nations (France generally excepted).

There are evidences also of certain psychological twists. It used to be said that mulatto Haitians "hate their fathers and despise their mothers," meaning that in colonial times and for a short time after the élite did not like to remember that they derived from a master-slave union. They realize nowadays that they would be accepted as social equals in few countries, and this makes them protest by self-assertion. Certainly a majority of the élite would be completely unwilling to admit that things are anywhere better done than in Haiti.

One generation after the wars which led to independence, the greater number of Haitians had practically forgotten that there was an outside world. Haiti was all they knew. With no standard of comparison for their lot in life the peasants ate, slept, raised their families, fell ill, and died without bothering their heads about such academic abstractions as equality. This uncomplaining acceptance of life, routine, and fate seems to be the essence of peasant existence. The Haitian peasant has been bound to the soil by mental inertia and by tradition more effectively than ever by law. When he has revolted it has been through conviction that someone was trying to change the old familiar ways, or because of physical maltreatment. Peasants have been bribed and paid to revolt, but as mercenaries they have entered only half-heartedly into warfare.

11. The phrases quoted here are fragments of statements made by Haitian élite to the author.

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565 484 177 186 rights of people of Negro blood. As a distinguished Haitian remarked, "It is from France that we draw our culture, our language, our literature, our attitudes of mind: why should we not love her?" The more time the élite spend in France, the less kinship they feel with the masses. There is not necessarily any conscious snobbery in this increasing discrepancy; it simply results from a life spent in entirely different environments. The Boston Brahmin, for example, may be kindhearted and yet feel little kinship with a Mississippi share-cropper.

564 Inside the castes one may find social distinctions familiar in democracies. There are well-to-do élite who set the standards of manners and entertainment, and there are peasant landholders who through force of personality dominate their rural neighborhoods. The intellectual man of the upper classes stands somewhat apart from the social whirl of "high society." An important government official has more prestige among the leisured classes than a small businessman, just as a powerful religious adept is more honored among the peasants than a happy-go-lucky ragamuffin. It is obvious, however, that within the élite caste social discrimination occurs more frequently and is more accurately observed than among the country people.

[184 177 208] Such phrases as "Haitian religion" or "Haitian public opinion" are accurate only in so far as the person who uses them defines the adjective "Haitian." One might describe truly a phenomenon characteristic of ninety-five out of a hundred Haitians and yet, in the opinion of those who dominate the economic, political, and social life, do injustice to Haiti.

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[p. 113]

INTRODUCTION

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If the visitor to Haiti is first struck by the wide separation between the élite and the peasant masses, the person who knows Haiti only through books is sure to think of it as a country of Voodoo. There is no error of fact here, for Voodoo is characteristic of Haiti. Nevertheless, what the American conjures up in his mind when he uses the word is almost certain to be misleading. In spite of detailed reports of anthropologists the average American clings firmly to his notion that Voodoo is Negro superstition chiefly concerned with charms or spells to "hoodoo" (a variation of the same word) an enemy. Scientists rarely succeed in correcting long-held but incorrect or one-sided impressions of the meaning of terms; they end rather by inventing a new word, or else continue the generally losing fight for precise usage, and so preserve the confusion.[1]

[104]

Since there is small likelihood of eradicating the inexact connotations of "Voodoo," many recent anthropologists have adopted such spellings as Vodun, Vodou, Vodoun, Vaudou, and Vodûn, all renditions of local pronunciation of the same term. *Vodun* (pronounced Vo-doon) has been chosen for use in this work, in the hope that readers will bear in mind that the folk religion is not mere idle superstition. A grasp of the real and distinctive religious beliefs and cult practices of the Haitian is very necessary to an understanding of the social picture.

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Like its caste system, the religious life of Haiti presents far-reaching contrasts. The only approved religion of the country is Roman Catholicism. To this faith all the élite who are religiously inclined, or wish to pay formal homage to the institution of religion, belong. No Protestant sect has ever gained a real foothold in Haiti. Catholic churches are among the imposing edifices in every town; Catholic priests are an everyday sight as they go about their parishes; Catholic brothers and sisters, with state support and approval, direct much of the higher education in the country.

1. Witness in anthropology the contrast between the popular and the scholarly meaning of *culture*, *race*, *taboo*, and *fetish*; in chemistry of *reaction* (as when a man is asked his "reaction" to an opinion); in psychology of *instinct*, *innate*, and *inherent*; and in sociology of *caste*, *institution*, and *social*.

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Paralleling the accepted form and existing at the same time, is the Vodun religion. To this faith practically every member of the lower caste adheres; but no casual visitor ever sees a Vodun "temple," or would recognize one if he saw it. Vodun "priests" likewise have no characteristic dress to set them apart from their barefoot country neighbors. The state gives absolutely no support to this folk religion, which has no seminaries, no orders, no publishing house, nor even any orthodoxy. One is not a member of the Vodun religion or church; rather one believes and practices Vodun.

The paradox of the religious situation in Haiti lies in the fact that although the masses are Vodun worshipers, most of them are likewise Catholics; that although the élite formally disapprove of Vodun, many of them are profoundly interested in it; that although the state supports the Catholic Church and officially frowns on Vodun, it does not, cannot, and apparently would not if it could, suppress it altogether. The result of these contradictions is a strange intermixture of creed and ritual, mental struggles among certain of the élite, supersensitiveness to foreign opinion in connection with "Voodoo," and a clandestine air which adds to the mystery most strangers are determined to find in Vodun.

An understanding of these religious ambiguities must depend to some degree upon a knowledge of Haitian history, for both Catholicism and Vodun have colonial origins, together with local peculiarities and historical developments, which make them characteristically Haitian.

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Granted these obvious difficulties, there is still little to be said for the zeal or integrity of churchmen in Saint-Domingue. Father Cabon cites a report to Rome in 1794, which, he remarks, "was not designed to be made public, and does not bear the earmarks of passion," and which flatly states that "since the expulsion of the Jesuits, the curés have for the most part led lives so indecent . . . that the citizens and Negroes have lost all the sentiments of religion which the Jesuits gave them."[3] There had been distinguished churchmen in Saint-Domingue before 1750, authors, scientists, teachers of some note, but none appeared thereafter. The rich French colony was not a bright star in the Catholic crown.

Undeterred by those who might have been their spiritual guides, the white people followed the easy path of self-indulgence. The universal testimony of visitors is that, with a few notable exceptions, immorality and cruelty were daily commonplaces. To make a fortune was the prime ambition of every white man, since money made possible the luxurious enjoyment of this world's goods. Protest against money-making or soft living would have been futile. Administrative agents turned public office to their own profit; judges sold justice to the highest bidder; planters drove their slaves to death; and priests dispensed religious solace for a tidy sum.

The freedmen, who in everything patterned their lives after social leaders in the white planter class, had no more concern for religion than their models. They attended Mass occasionally as a social event, where they might see and be seen. When in the latter days of the colony discriminatory legislation required that colored persons sit in separate parts of the church, most of the affranchis simply refrained from attending Mass: their religious zeal was not so great as to make them submit to the public shame of segregation. In their daily lives, likewise, they followed the example of the white planters in pursuing pleasure rather than sobriety, "culture" rather than religious zeal. Like the whites, they were often licentious in their conduct. When it came their turn to direct affairs of state in free Haiti, there was little interest in spiritual matters among them. The intellectuals of the group paid homage to the liberal philosophers of the century rather than to religious thinkers.

If religion was at a low ebb in the prosperous days of the colony, it almost disappeared in the excitement of the years following the

3. Ibid., p. 33. revolt of the slaves (1791).

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175 793 795 [114] concludes: "With regard to the ecclesiastical institutions of the republic we may safely say . . . that if the standing army be one cause of the degradation of the people, the Church is surely another; and the sooner it can be reformed, the better for religion, for morals, and for the physical well-being of the community."[9]

175 793 795 659 Eventually the state felt it necessary to protect the people from these predatory priests. True, people paid for what they considered to be services performed, but the legislators could not permit unlimited graft in the name of religion. An act of 1840,[10] therefore, set a fee of half a dollar for each baptism;[11] $8 for a marriage with Mass, $4 for one without a Mass; an ordinary Mass, 37 cents; a High Mass, service, or funeral "of the first class" (that is, with choir, sacristan, acolytes, and churchwarden), $60; funerals of the second class, $20; funerals of the third class, $10. Articles of the act specify what shall constitute the three classes of service, and it is then stated, "Neither rectors nor vicars shall receive anything for offices at which they do not assist in person, except in cases of illness." The Haitians were not receiving true religious instruction, but at least their government tried to prevent their being mulcted by the spurious churchmen.

175 771 184 Since Haiti had no schools except the few attended by children of the élite, religious instruction of youth was almost nonexistent. The average élite man was openly an unbeliever, for it required little acumen to show him that if the priests represented religion there was nothing to commend it. Hunt in 1860 said: "Many of the educated are about where the French were when they left the island. They believe in Voltaire, whom I have not unfrequently heard them characterize as the greatest man who ever lived."[12] In contrast to the men, the women made more of a show of being devout and attentive to the formal duties of religion, but according to Franklin they

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are not actuated by any religious feeling. Going to church is a mere matter of parade with them, the sabbath being a day of festivities, and not set aside for religious devotion. The female congregations which frequent the churches in Hayti appear better prepared for an opera, or some other public amusement, than for the sacred duties of offering up their prayers in adoration of the Deity.

9. John Candler, *Brief Notices of Hayti*, pp. 98 ff.
10. Chap. IV, articles 28–31.
11. The figures cited in the Act are in gourdes.
12. Benjamin S. Hunt, *Remarks on Hayti as a Place of Settlement for Afric-Americans* (Philadelphia, 1860), p. 18.

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The men seldom or never go to mass, except on the days particularly set apart by the government as public fêtes. On these occasions the president and all the officers of Hayti go in procession, but the idea of devotion, I believe, never enters their contemplation. Such days are merely set aside for celebrating some particular event, which it is wished should be handed down to posterity. These occasions present only the external symbol of religion, the whole people being either ignorant or careless of its real character. Their manner and appearance during the celebration of the mass shew that they have no inward feelings of piety or devotion.[13]

Catholicism in Haiti, then, had fallen on evil days; Protestantism, on the other hand, was unable to gain any foothold. Boyer, indifferent to all religion, did not even care to tolerate Wesleyan missionaries as Pétion had done, for when certain of them arrived and were met with "persecution and stoning by a mob," it required persuasion to gain his assent to freeing those the police had taken into custody. He forbade any further meetings of Wesleyans, on the ground that they stirred up riots. At the close of Boyer's administration it was estimated that there were only about 1,200 Protestants in the country, mostly Methodists and Baptists, and these primarily Negroes who had come from the United States to settle in the republic.

Although the Haitian government probably derived a certain satisfaction from controlling a state Church, Boyer was impelled both by circumstance and his own temperament to obtain the approval of the Holy See. His own tepid spiritual zeal had nothing to do with the case; Haitian public order would benefit by a superior group of priests, and Haitian prestige would rise, he thought, with recognition by Rome. Having already in 1826 settled the conflict between France and Haiti in the political sphere, Boyer tried assiduously to end the schism from Rome. His propositions were examined with benevolence by the Pope, who conferred upon the primate of the Indies, archbishop of Santo Domingo, the title of archbishop of Haiti. This personage, however, was a Spaniard already established in the comfortable city of Santo Domingo amidst people of his own nationality. He could not be persuaded to move to Port-au-Prince. The failure of Boyer's efforts is due more to this ecclesiastic than to uncoöperativeness on the part of Rome. From 1834 to 1860 the Court of Rome had official representatives in Haiti, but they cannot have been very effective men, for conditions in

13. James Franklin, *The Present State of Hayti*, pp. 394–395.

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Any casual attempt to assess the importance of religion of the people is sure to prove erroneous, for in no phase of life are outward appearances so deceptive. What the unsophisticated peasant believes can be ascertained on the whole more accurately than the beliefs of the intelligent élite. To the foreign observer, Roman Catholicism seems to play as large and as small a part in the thinking of the Haitian upper classes as among members of upper-class French society. Outwardly, the élite are professing Catholics or not religious at all. It is considered proper to attend Mass and otherwise to pay respect to religious forms; actually one loses nothing in prestige if he is not a practicing Christian. Society seems to exert no pressure in the matter. Only if a member of the upper class fears for the security of his social position, or knows that rumors are afloat of his addiction to Vodun, does he feel impelled to become assiduous in his open attentions to the Church.

The national sensitiveness to skin color is apparent in the priestly complexions. Since the old tradition lingers that "baptism by a black will not stick," not even the peasants welcome native Catholic priests. The God and saints of Christianity need the intercession of white men, just as the Vodun spirits need that of natives. In the early days peasants stoned Negro priests who tried to administer the Catholic sacraments. Such an attitude toward a black clergy falls in well with the preferences of the élite. If there were Haitian priests, they would probably be drawn from the élite class since this is the educated group; but it might happen that some devout peasant would rise to the priesthood and so have the care of a parish including élite—a contingency unthinkable to the aristocrat. Snobbishness, indeed, affects the usefulness of the town priests, for the élite members of the congregation insist on having sermons in French, a language which only the small minority understand, rather than in the Créole which is the speech of everyone, intelligible to gentry and humble alike. The Mass is consequently celebrated for the people at large in unknown tongues, Latin for the ritual, French for the sermon; the benefit they derive from it must be wholly from their inner communion stimulated by the actions of the service. The town priests are often willing enough to accede to élite pressure in the matter of language, for they know French as their mother tongue and would have to learn Créole; although some of the more devoted priests become adept in native speech, using it in their personal

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The common people of Haiti are continually creating [his phrase is much more revealing: "en gestation de"] *loa*, or new Vodoun "saints." Popular tradition, long before independence, refers to a certain Don Pédro, a being of flesh and blood who from the Spanish end of the island had come at a certain period to live in the mountains of the commune of Petit-Goâve. This Don Pédro was the man who introduced into Haiti that violent dance which, by corruption, the people call "the pétro." Upon his death, Don Pédro came to occupy an honorable place in the Vodoun pantheon, bringing in his train a whole group of progeny, such as Jean-Philippe Pétro, Criminel Pétro, etc.[21]

As might be logically deduced, certain powerful ancestors become deified as Pétro loa.

It would require field trips into every district of Haiti to compile a full list of the various loa who receive homage from Haitians; some appear to have only a local following, others are honored over a wide district, and a few are reverenced throughout the country. If Vodun ever reached the stage of founding a seminary of sacred theology—a highly improbable event—one of its most imperative functions would be the collection, classification, and explanation of the attributes of the hundreds of loa, specifying whether they are Haitian or African in origin, Pétro or Rada, powerful or complaisant, inclined prevailingly to benevolence or to malice. Lacking such a proper catalogue, it will suffice to mention only the most commonly accepted figures. In reflecting upon the characteristics of these gods, the well-informed reader will be struck by the numerous parallels to divinities of other faiths so remote that Haitians could not possibly have known of them; similar emotional needs seem to produce similar deities to satisfy them.[22]

Legba is the name of the loa most frequently invoked, not because he is the most powerful, but because he is the interlocutor between man and his gods. Before any ceremony may begin, Legba is addressed: "*Papa Legba, ouvri barrière pour nous.*" If he is not first worshiped, the other deities may not come to possess the people. Legba guards every door and gate, every highway and crossroads. He is still an important god in modern Dahomey, where his attributes are much the same as in Haiti. The people feel no necessity of

21. Dorsainvil, *op. cit.*, p. 46.

22. Classical anthropologists might have called this phenomenon "parallelism"; the word is accurate enough if only similarity, not identity, be understood.

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Catholicism. I have seen such an altar, with its adjacent table, bearing a crucifix, candles, (holy) water, lithographs of the "Assumption of the Virgin," "St. George and the Dragon," the "Adoration of the Kings," and certain unrecognized but distinctly European saints; in addition to these objects, however, were such unecclesiastical articles as bananas, rice, beans, squash, various bottles of drinks, and plates of food. Near by were the sacrificial animals.

Vodun makes use frequently of one sacrament of the Church—baptism. Needless to say, this rite is not a monopoly of Christianity, and its use in the folk religion may very well have come from Africa. Constant witnessing of the rite in church must nevertheless have influenced its adoption for all important Vodun ceremonials. The drums used in the dance are baptized; so also is the first loa to possess a devotee; at many other special times the rite is likewise performed, generally with a set of prayers which invoke Catholic saints and Vodun loa alike.

Mention has already been made of the identification of Rada and Pétro loa with certain saints and martyrs of the Church. Such identifications are not uniform, but vary in different parts of the country. Legba is generally associated with Saint Anthony, but often (and to the Christian, more understandably) with Saint Peter who traditionally guards the gates of heaven; the Virgin Mary quite obviously is related, whether as Queen of Heaven, as the Sorrowing Mother, or as the Innocent Virgin, with numerous manifestations of Maîtresse Erzulie; Damballa, whose symbol is the serpent, is sometimes Moses (whose brother's rod became a serpent consuming other serpents, and who by lifting up a serpent in the wilderness cured the people of their snake bites) and sometimes Saint Patrick (whose association with snakes is well known). Other identifications are numerous, showing the penchant of the people for combining what they know of both religions.[2]

Many of the loa have, like the Catholic saints, their symbols, their special days, colors, and other associations. Some like white, some red; the serpent, the rainbow, the crossroads are among the symbols; sacred days occur weekly, Tuesday being Legba's, Wednesday Ogun's, Friday Ermlie's, and Saturday Baron Samedi's. It may be

2. The distinguished Haitian ethnographer, sociologist, and historian, Dr. Jean Price-Mars, has made a list of some of these identifications in his *Ainsi parla l'oncle*, pp. 180–182.

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member of the Haitian élite takes from Catholicism is quite different probably from what the peasant absorbs: the point is that the peasant does not find the faith either incomprehensible, or uncongenial to his own tradition and penchants—as he might find the tenets of, say, Unitarianism or Presbyterianism. It is easy to fit the Trinity, the Virgin, the saints, the Mass, holy water, Lent, and practically every other external aspect of belief and ritual into his mental set. He makes his own selection and his own reconciliations. It seems the most natural thing in the world to him to light a candle and make the sign of the cross as he baptizes a new drum for use in the Vodun dance. The Haitian peasant, in fact, makes a tranquil unity of his two religions, to match the obvious oneness of his universe.

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it seems not radically to have affected the masses but only the fairly well-to-do.

The *Royal Almanac* for the year 1814 touches proudly upon the moral state of the kingdom. The author of the almanac, the Comte de la Limonade, says: "Great attention is paid to morals and manners. Marriage is honored, protected, and encouraged; no Haitian who is unmarried can fill any place of distinction. Divorce is not permitted." All this was true; yet the mass of Haitians still remained unmarried. Nevertheless, the quotation indicates the extent to which Christophe had gone in his effort to reform marriage and morals among his people; to set them in the European tradition and draw them out of their African and colonial backgrounds.

While Christophe was trying to effect reforms in the North, Pétion was accepting his Southern folk as they were. Hardly a law during his twelve-year administration touches the subject of marriage. The élite colored people continued to make proper legal marriages and so insure the inheritance of their legitimate children. The common folk lived their family lives without weddings, and if property questions arose, custom ruled, backed by public opinion in their little communities.

Such are the backgrounds out of which modern Haitian sex relations have developed. From African tradition came family life, the importance of property to stabilize a union, insignificance of a wedding ceremony, familiarity with matrilineal kinship and descent; from French colonial practice, formal marriage to establish a family with social ambition, casual sex relations for pleasure outside this marriage, the claim of legitimate children to all property (in contrast to folk custom, where few legitimate children were born); from Dessalines, an emphasis upon the African tradition and realism; from Christophe, an insistence upon strict French practice in marriage and in the passage of property.

From among these alternatives Haiti made a choice which is an excellent example of what Keller calls "automatic selection in the mores."[7] There was no congress to select one procedure rather than another. Because Pétion and Boyer followed a *laissez-faire* policy in social matters, the people took the path of least resistance.

7. A. G. Keller, *Societal Evolution* (revised ed., New York, 1931), chaps. IV and V.

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numbers in the army have been radically reduced; yet in that very fact there is the possibility for the only armed persons in Haiti, the present Garde d'Haiti, to effect political coups. But at least the budget is not strained by the salaries of thousands of unnecessary soldiers, as was true in pre-Occupation days.

2. The separation of the masses from government. By providing a minimum of local government, but that fairly effective, the national government has been able to keep the peasants out of all but revolutionary politics. Rural communities have ordinarily got along well enough without formal government, so that the history of Haitian political thought and the analysis of Haitian political forms would seem of affairs interesting to only a fraction of the population.

It need hardly be repeated, after a reflection upon these apparent permanencies of political life, that Haiti is not a democracy.

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baby: when she does she substitutes a mode of feeding on fruits and solids which favors digestive disturbance and nutritive diseases in the infant.

At the age when children of the élite would be starting to school, peasant children are beginning work in the fields, hoeing, weeding, and carrying, always under the tropical sun. Cuts and bruises, sometimes serious, are improperly treated when they occur and so lead to tetanus or to enormous ulcers.

Hard work and a simple mode of outdoor life prove, in Haiti at least, not to be the keys to good health which a romantic might fancy them. Haiti has been one of the unhealthiest places in the world. One feels that it has been lucky to escape such scourges as typhus, cholera, and bubonic plague; that smallpox has not been virulent in its epidemics, and that the people developed an immunity to yellow fever. It has, indeed, been luck rather than cleanliness and proper medical care which has protected the people in these instances.

In 1838 Boyer founded a hospital school at Port-au-Prince, giving it the name of The National School of Medicine. It did not function as a school, however, until 1860 when Geffrard reorganized it and gave it life. Geffrard also sent young men to Europe to study, installed laboratories of physics and chemistry in the upper schools of the capital, and made possible the appearance of an intellectual élite."[11] The next burst of energy in matters of hygiene came around 1890 when, under the influence of Dr. Léon Audain, the first health records were kept, and the spirit of scientific research reached Haitian medicine.

From 1804 to 1860, then, there was practically no proper care for sick people. In the latter years of the century a few trained physicians, with sadly deficient equipment, practiced in the towns. Not until after the Occupation was the rural mass of the population even touched by the medical knowledge which had been developing all over the civilized world for decades. Clinics, wholesale vaccinations and inoculations, and campaigns of enlightenment have in the past twenty years worked wonders. The Vodun practitioner, however, still is the "expert" who treats most illnesses, and healing remains one of his major functions.

11. Geffrard established schools of law, music, painting, and navigation. The latter two collapsed. The same president founded the high schools of Port-au-Prince, Jacmel, and Gonaïves.

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lished in many parts of the country. Attendance was fair for a few days, then rapidly declined. It is obviously a task requiring patience, persistence, originality, and tact on the part of the teacher to keep the students interested enough in school to make them attend regularly, for certainly the parents, who themselves have had no education, will not force their children to attend. On the contrary, the average peasant parent feels it much more important for his children to be at work in the fields, doing something useful, than to waste time learning to read and write—accomplishments which peasants have done without from time immemorial. Forced attendance is clearly out of the question. Obviously, too, at the small wages paid to country teachers the necessary qualities of personality are uncommon, to say the least. Five thousand men and women with the consecration of missionaries would be required even to begin the work of general education.

A practically insoluble problem, given current attitudes, is that of the language to be used in rural schools, assuming that these are built. The only official language of Haiti is French; the only language understood by the masses is Créole, which in spite of its French origin is as different from that tongue as Dutch from German. Now every Haitian, high and low, knows Créole, so that the question immediately arising is: Why should not the rural teachers teach in Créole? The answer involves every sort of inward prejudice, yearning, and instilled doctrine. The teacher is almost sure to be struggling up to the élite class, and to require him to deny himself the luxury of speaking French (to him almost a patent of nobility) would be heart-rending. Likewise, he would have his "good" reason for teaching school in French: the unity of the country demands a single language; all schoolbooks are in French, none in Créole; and Créole has no literature, nor even an accepted spelling. The fact remains that except in rare instances all schoolteachers use French to their pupils, and not one peasant out of a hundred can even guess what is being said in that language.

Assuming that schools were available, as well as trained teachers willing to speak the folk language, the next problem would be the curriculum. The whole tradition of élite education is literary, not practical. Teachers trained in this tradition might teach Racine and Montaigne, but not soil conservation and new methods of planting. Peasants with a knowledge of French literature would, of course, be

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minister or an outstanding intellectual. Variations are frequently (some even say generally) mere casual accidents, surprising inspirations of the moment. The changes which have come over the face of the Vodun religion are examples: in almost no instance can the additions or emendations be traced back to their originators, yet Vodun is clearly different now from what it was in Boyer's time. Just as no one knows who initiates a change in the folkway of language, coining a slang phrase, modifying a pronunciation, so the makers of most variations in folkways and mores are anonymous.

Given infinite time and patience, one might compile a list of mores in any country, beginning first with those which require absolute conformity from all persons, and running down to those which express social ideals but which may nevertheless be honored in the breach. In our own country, the mores condemning incest and cannibalism are not only our rules but our unanimous practice; and if a person breaks either we punish him severely. At the other end of our list are those mores requiring truthfulness and honor. In calling these American mores we pay homage to an ideal—and then tell our white lies as a part of the observance of social amenities, or make our "shrewd" business deals in order to get on in the world. For neither of these breaches of the mores is there any concerted social punishment; on the contrary, we have been known to praise those who broke them. In describing the culture of a society, therefore, it is necessary to report both the mores as ideal and the mores as practice.

The larger and more complex a society becomes, the fewer the mores shared in common by all members of that society. In a small colonial American village, isolated from much contact with strangers, the whole population was bound by scores of mores touching all phases of life. In modern America, on the contrary, if one should consider American society as a whole it would probably be difficult to find a dozen mores shared commonly by us all, or if shared, exerting the same force to conformity. We have had to develop a measure of tolerance with our 130 million neighbors, a live-and-let-live principle which has been aptly called "antagonistic coöperation."

Each district in Haiti, in the effective isolation of illiteracy and sedentary life, has developed its own characteristic mores, of which a limited number correspond with those of other Haitian districts. It is these general correspondences which have been treated in this book. Within each district, likewise, there is the usual hierarchy of rules

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ranging from those requiring strict observance down to those permitting latitude of behavior.

It has, then, been the primary purpose of this book to show the gradual development (the word is used with no connotation of progress toward a conscious goal) of a consistent group of mores and social institutions in Haiti since the moment of her independence. The course of Haitian social history provides an almost unlimited opportunity for further study along the lines of contemporary American sociological research. Certain skeptics have pertinently criticized this sociology as narrowly provincial, calling it a social science limited only to the American scene, and valid consequently only for American society. Such a charge is precisely the reverse of that directed at European sociology, which finds congenial the development of philosophies of history independent of research in any specific field.

If the active American sociologist should extend his field of investigation he would, whatever his dominant interest, find much to reward his research in Haiti. For example, some of the most productive work in the United States has been in studies of neighborhoods,[2] communities,[3] and regions.[4] No neighborhood study has ever been made in Haiti, nor any regional study. Herskovits[5] has pointed the way to all future students of Haitian communities. Most research done by scholars in Haiti, however, has concerned itself with one or another of the social institutions (religion has been the most popular) rather than with thorough studies of individual communities.

For the social psychologist Haiti presents a rich and untouched field. It has the advantages of a limited geography and population, and so is less complex than the United States; yet Haitian problems are familiar enough to make comparison with American problems valid. Not only has there as yet been no investigation of the process of socialization, that is, of what happens to children as they take on

2. The neighborhood is generally defined as a primary group in society in which face-to-face contacts are frequent and intimate.

3. The community is a group of people living in comparative proximity, sharing basic interests and activities, having relatively common usages and traditions, and acknowledging common rule.

4. The region is a functional part of a larger area of economic, cultural, and geographical homogeneity. The Southeastern States of the United States are conceived as a region; in Haiti, the five departments are regions.

5. In his *Life in a Haitian Valley*. This is a study of the community in and around Mirebalais.